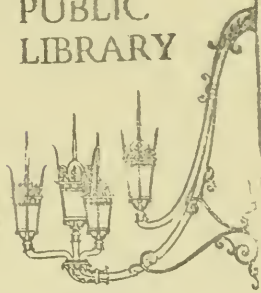


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Improving the Management of
Downtown Public Spaces

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IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF
DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACES

A National Overview of Programs for Private Sector Downtown
Organizations

First Edition -- Final Draft for Review

NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION. PROGRAMS SUBJECT
TO VERIFICATION BY LOCAL DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATIONS.

By: Project for Public Spaces, Inc.
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NOTE:

This handbook does not contain the following, which will be included in the final version:

1. Each chapter will conclude with a section, "Further Information," which will give full bibliographic references to publications mentioned in the text, plus additional sources of information.
2. An appendix with sample vending ordinances.
3. An appendix with addresses or organizations whose programs are described in the text.

This handbook was funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal Agency.

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Preface

Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS) is a non-profit corporation of designers and social scientists who study how people use all kinds of public spaces -- streets, parks, plazas, public transportation facilities, museums. We then make recommendations for how these spaces can be better designed and managed to improve use. Since our incorporation in 1975, much of our work has dealt with improvements to downtown public spaces, the subject of this handbook.

This handbook really represents the culmination of seven years thought and experience with downtowns. Over this time, we have completed specific studies in over a dozen different cities of all sizes. In our earlier work, we were mostly concerned with how spaces could be better designed, with management being an important component to assure that a design worked on a day-to-day basis. Our thinking has changed, however. Design is important, but in many cases, management is more important and can accomplish more, sooner than any urban design scheme. As in a suburban shopping center, design is only one ingredient to success.

We suggest that there are several complementary books and publications to this handbook on downtown public spaces. William H. Whyte's book and 16mm film The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces are an excellent introduction to what makes lively, vital public spaces in downtowns. PPS's Designing Effective Pedestrian Improvements for Business Districts, published by the American Planning Association, is also a useful companion to this handbook, since it deals more specifically with design issues.

(Acknowledgements to follow)

INTRODUCTION

Before you begin to read this handbook, think about your downtown and what it is like to walk around on its streets and in its parks and plazas. Are the sidewalks clean and maintained? Are there things to do at lunch time? Are there places to sit in the sun? Is there a certain street which is particularly fun to shop on? Is there a place you can pick up a sandwich and eat it outside?

These are the types of questions that Project for Public Spaces has been posing across the country for the last six years, trying to determine what people do, why they do it and what they would like to do in downtown. This research has documented that many basic needs of people -- such as to sit, to feel safe, to be entertained -- have too long been neglected in many downtowns.

Both downtown businesses and city governments are ultimately concerned with public space -- the streets, sidewalks, parks and plazas -- for it is here that the quality of life in a city is often measured. People will not shop downtown if they are afraid on its streets, nor will they ignore litter and garbage when a shopping mall provides a more attractive alternative. The streets, sidewalks and a variety of other spaces for public use largely define the city for the pedestrian. It is on this stage that both public and private investments are often staked.

Shopping center managers have long understood how to create safe, clean, comfortable, and lively places which attract people. Public spaces in shopping centers are constantly maintained, have private security guards, offer the opportunity to buy a snack while strolling, and provide entertainment, promotions and often elaborate seats, fountains, and other amenities.

Even more relevant to downtowns are the examples of comprehensive management at large urban developments such as Rockefeller Center in New York, Faneuil Hall in Boston, Harborplace in Baltimore, and Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco. At each of these, privately-managed developments, the daily operations of security, maintenance, events programming, leasing, and design alterations are coordinated through a central office which is responsive to both the needs of the people who visit these places and to tenants. When one visits one of these developments, there is a feeling that someone is definitely responsible for taking care of all the details which make a place seem safe, clean, and exciting.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES?

The comprehensive management of public spaces in a downtown -- or a Rockefeller Center or a Harborplace -- is a way of responding to identifiable problems and opportunities in particular spaces with many specific, different strategies. This handbook divides these strategies into three main areas:

- o Supplementing such city services as maintenance, security, and transportation management.
- o Creating an exciting downtown "marketplace" with programmed activities and events, vendors, farmer's markets, and cafes.
- o Initiating design improvements to public spaces including design review of major developments so that they are integrated in the downtown, and advocating needed improvements such as sidewalk widenings, seating, trees, and information kiosks.

Comprehensive management integrates these different strategies to perform several functions at the same time, all aimed at creating a more attractive, lively, and comfortable space. For instance, a downtown organization may hire and train a maintenance attendant to not only clean sidewalks, but also to serve as a "host" in the public space -- making sure that people basically feel comfortable, safe, and know where they are going. In order to provide this service, the downtown needs to know that it wants to hire someone capable and willing to do more than just the job of cleaning the sidewalk. This approach requires thinking more comprehensively about what the downtown needs to work better for the people who use it.

In interviews with the more innovative managers of public spaces across the country, several essential ingredients to successful management of public space emerged. The trick is to develop such an approach given the complex web of overlapping government and private sector jurisdictions which tend to paralyze so many downtowns. At minimum, a comprehensive approach requires:

- o That someone is and feels responsible for making sure that the space (a plaza, street, or mall) works well for the people who use it or want to use it.
- o That all of the details of cleaning, repair, safety, and security are taken care of on a daily basis.
- o That the public space is made as exciting, active, and supportive for spontaneous socializing as possible. (In other words, programming events and activities that attract people into the space or under-used areas of the street.)

- o That the public space is monitored over time by someone, to make sure that changes are made in the design and location of benches, maintenance scheduling, types of security surveillance and presence, etc. as a response to the way that the use of the space changes.

WHAT ARE OTHER DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATIONS DOING TO IMPROVE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACES

Recognizing the need for more information on strategies for managing public spaces, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) conducted a study of two hundred downtown organizations which were members of the International Downtown Executives Association (IDEA). The study was funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The purpose of the survey was to assess the types of organizations involved in various aspects of downtown management, the kinds of spaces they managed, their funding sources, their priorities given to those issues which we called "public space management", their operating budget commitments to the same areas, the strategies they used, their methods of judging the effectiveness of each of those strategies, and the positive or negative effects they've encountered since implementing them. From these questionnaire results, PPS selected organizations which either committed significant proportions of their operating budget to a particular strategy or had developed what PPS considered to be a particularly innovative strategy and interviewed them in depth by telephone or in person.

For the purpose of this handbook PPS has selected examples from these various sources to demonstrate different ways to approach downtown problems. This document is not exhaustive, there are many instances of downtown organizations with an innovative approach which have not been included. However, this sample does range from coast to coast with cities of less than 25,000 to over 250,000 people, though the programs described tend to be more applicable to cities with populations over 50,000.

Most of the organizations which contributed any staff time or portion of their budget to management strategies for public spaces were either downtown business associations, or city agencies. In many cases they were established primarily to promote development and public relations campaigns for the downtown and were funded through membership dues, contributions from corporations, special tax assessments or city funds.

Over half of the organizations surveyed actually considered the management of public spaces a low priority for their operations. Surprisingly, less than five percent of the organizations surveyed wanted to see their organization expand into any of the following areas of concern: maintenance control, public improvements, activity programming, tenant solicitation or traffic control. After analyzing the surveys, PPS has concluded that many downtown organizations unduly limit themselves to promotional activities when they could be involved with making more substantial improvements to the day-to-day management of the downtown. This conclusion is drawn primarily from a comparison between the severity of the problems identified by many organizations in their downtowns, and the actual level of involvement the same organizations have in solving them.

There are some downtown organizations which have had particular foresight to encourage downtown businesses to recognize themselves as a community with common goals and problems. The Downtown Development District in New Orleans and Downtown Denver, Inc., are both examples where private sector organizations have taken a comprehensive role in improving management and design of their downtown's public spaces. These two organizations, in particular, have developed a comprehensive approach to downtown management by developing a wide range of programs for improving maintenance, security, programmed entertainment, transportation, urban design and retailing in their downtowns. Both organizations run their programs with budgets over \$1 million, and raise funds through voluntary contributions or special tax assessments on downtown properties. Both organizations have become substantial forces in the development of their respective, fast-growing downtowns.

Today, downtowns are faced with cutbacks at all levels of government -- local, state, and federal. Grants for capital improvements, cultural programs, park renovation, and job developments have all been decreased, or eliminated entirely. In some respects, the private sector has no choice but to take on more responsibility for the day-to-day management of downtown if the progress in downtown revitalization in the 1980's is to be maintained. Downtown organizations and local governments are still going to be under pressure to produce results, but mainly with local funds. A comprehensive management program for downtown public spaces

can help in the response to this pressure, because it is oriented towards small-scale, implementable, highly visible results,

It is important to note that while this handbook documents the public space management activities of many cities, much research remains to be done to understand what variables contribute to a particular program's success. PPS interviewed many organizations which had no systematic way of evaluating the success of their programs. Therefore, a strategy which works in one city may not work in others. Establishing appropriate criteria for evaluating programs and then carrying out the evaluation is a critical issue that needs to be further explored.

The area of public space management is fraught with assumptions that need to be delineated and clarified. For example, PPS hears too often of merchants' associations which, believing security and crime to be major issues, demand additional foot patrols on their streets. But what effect does this have on the perceptions of pedestrians or shoppers? The image of an area is crucial, and additional police may very well be interpreted as an indication that the streets are unsafe, with the result that streets are used less and less. Thus the strategy may exacerbate the problem it attempts to solve.

It is important, therefore, not just to "transplant" programs from other cities without considering whether it is indeed appropriate. Each chapter concludes with a series of questions that should be considered in developing programs in different areas, and which may serve as a guide in analyzing the problems and potential of a downtown.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT

In this handbook we are primarily concerned with management programs which can be initiated by existing privately funded downtown organizations. Most of these organizations across the United States operate on relatively small budgets collected from corporate contributions and membership dues. Very few organizations have been able to expand their services without substantially increasing their membership or supplementing the voluntary contributions with special tax assessments on downtown property owners or city contributions. While the latter option is not particularly appealing to property owners who already feel overburdened with taxes, there are increasing signs of acceptance for the concept of special tax assessment districts across the country. In fact, fourteen commercial districts in New York City are considering the development of special tax assessment districts to help improve their areas.

The downtown organization which is considering expanding into areas of downtown management will want to consider all of the options for funding new programs. There are examples of organizations raising revenues to achieve its objectives through voluntary corporate contributions, membership dues, profit-making enterprises such as parking garages, Community Development Block Grants from the city, or federal grant programs. However, in order to insure consistent support and a constant annual source of revenues, the downtown development district with special taxing authority currently provides the strongest approach. (For detailed case studies, see Appendix A.)

The Downtown Development District Concept

Downtown development districts are established on the assumption that some of the financial responsibility for providing or improving street services which are over and above traditional private or public sector responsibilities, rests with merchants and/or property owners. These districts usually address one or more of the following issues: joint promotion and advertising campaigns; maintenance, security and parking management programs; physical improvements to commercial streets; and incentives for private development of the downtown.

Each state has its own legislation pertaining to the establishment of business improvement districts or downtown development districts. It is not our intention to describe the procedures for establishing a district, but to demonstrate the types of programs that can be funded.

The most sophisticated example of an organization providing additional services to a downtown is the Downtown Development District (DDD) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Established in 1975 to include a one hundred block area, the district directly funds programs in security, maintenance, promotions, cultural events, economic development, and street improvements through its special tax assessment on all properties in the District. The District's budget and scope of services have expanded each year to a 1981 operating budget of over \$1 million. The DDD is also embarking on four major capital projects for which it has established a reserve fund for the debt service on the issuance of approximately \$6.5 million in limited obligation bonds.

Specific programs of the DDD are described in detail in the following chapters. However, it is important to note at this time several difficulties which a former DDD's Executive Director has described in relation to the special tax assessment district concept. First, property owners now have increased expectations because they are paying the special tax. Every year there are renewed demands for additional police and sanitation services to be funded by the District. Therefore, the DDD devotes two-thirds of its annual budget to supplementing city services, rather than developing more innovative programs and improvements to the downtown. Second, the DDD has difficulty defining the extent of its services, because its objective has always been to only provide services which are over and above those normally provided by the city. Tax districts are not meant to be a substitute for city funds, but as an addition to regular city expenditures and investments in the central business district. It has been very difficult to determine what level of service should normally be provided by the city.

The Denver Partnership is also conducting an aggressive program to improve management of downtown's public spaces. If the city government gives final approval, the Partnership will operate a \$1.5 million management program on the newly-constructed 16th Street Mall. The program will be funded by a combination of voluntary membership dues and a special tax assessment placed on all properties located in established "zones of benefit" from the 16th Street Mall. The Partnership will be responsible for all maintenance functions, coordination and improvement of security, and regulation of commercial and entertainment activities on the Mall.

From the examples described above, it is clearly imperative that a downtown organization which chooses to provide additional services articulate its objectives and scope of services from the beginning. Otherwise, it will not be improving the management of downtown, but just maintaining the status quo.

PPS

SUPPLEMENTING CITY SERVICES

City governments have traditionally provided many services to downtowns ranging from trash pick-up to police enforcement to traffic control. In recent years, however, these services have been declining or have not kept up with some of the dramatic transformations that have taken place with new developments or public space improvements.

While city governments generally recognize the importance of special, more intensive service delivery to downtowns, their budgets are usually overextended and committed to other neighborhoods in the city. These neighborhoods often form a strong political base, making it difficult for the city to commit more funds to service the downtown, even though the downtown is a substantial contributor of taxes. While downtown organizations often devote substantial time to lobbying for more services, in many cases the downtown just cannot obtain any more support from City Hall.

The physical design of many downtowns across the United States has also changed dramatically in the last twenty years. A variety of new types of spaces have been created for which city governments are inexperienced in providing services. These new public spaces--plazas, small urban parks, transit malls, pedestrian malls, arcades, and widened sidewalks--require more labor intensive maintenance because of the use of such materials as brick and wood and because of benches, bus shelters, and other amenities. The new urban designs for these spaces may also create hidden niches or under-utilized areas which require special attention from a security point of view. Finally, there have, in recent years, been many improvements to transportation systems that are relevant mainly to the downtown. Special attention by the private sector who benefits the most from these improvements is not, therefore, an unreasonable proposition.

The following sections outline a number of approaches to supplementing city services in downtowns, once a downtown organization has determined that the downtown community demands a different level of service than the city is willing to provide. These services are described under three distinct categories: maintenance, security, and transportation management. However, they are all essentially interconnected. For example, some aspects of maintenance are dependent on enforcement of sanitation codes while good perceptions of security are dependent on a well maintained street free of litter and graffiti.

It is important to stress throughout this section that, when a management organization becomes involved with supplementing city services, it is to provide services which are over and above those that are provided by the city. The downtown organization should not replace traditional city services, only supplement them to fill a special need.

Maintenance

OVERVIEW

The maintenance of downtown public spaces is one of the most controversial and emotional concerns of members of downtown communities across the U.S. This one issue has often paralyzed cooperative efforts between the downtown business community and City Hall. PPS has surveyed pedestrians and merchants in many downtowns and finds an almost universal complaint about the appearance of downtown streets. In fact, merchants are so adamant about the need to have cleaner streets that they are often unwilling to consider other types of improvements until they see progress in street maintenance. Therefore, it is often imperative that a downtown organization which wants to accurately represent the downtown community's interest take initiative in solving maintenance problems and produce results.

The "maintenance issue" can often be a scapegoat for larger problems having to do with social and economic changes in the downtown. People also have different standards for the cleanliness of public spaces. For instance, in surveys conducted in several cities, PPS found that office workers who did not use the streets tended to be more critical of downtown's appearance than the shoppers and people who were surveyed on the street.

While people's perceptions about the maintenance of an area can vary greatly, improved maintenance operations can produce highly visible and satisfying results. In many cases, the improvements are measurable in terms of the reduction of litter in an area or in the number of planters with well-kept flowers. People will notice the difference. For instance, in Portland, Oregon, where two mall attendants and several contracted crews take meticulous care of cleaning, planting and repairs on the transit mall, the downtown merchants have few complaints about the cleanliness of the street.

Many downtown organizations get directly involved with maintenance programs for the downtown. Over one-half of the organizations surveyed by PPS encourage businesses to maintain sidewalks, conduct public awareness campaigns, and lobby for more city services. Fifteen percent of the organizations contract out to private contractors to provide special maintenance services, while another 6% actually have their own crews.

Maintenance problems on downtown streets are generally the result of a poor delineation of responsibility between city agencies

and downtown private interests, and insufficient or inappropriate maintenance programs. Lack of daily street cleaning, poorly placed trash receptacles, poor scheduling of trash pick-up, and lack of repair of sidewalks, gutters or street furniture are all causes of maintenance problems. In cities where major improvements such as a pedestrian or transit mall have been constructed, problems have arisen because brick, granite, wood and elaborate amenities are more labor intensive to maintain. For instance, in Providence, Rhode Island, the Westminster Mall's new brick paving was marred by splotches of chewing gum soon after its installation. A one-time cleaning effort was estimated to cost \$30,000. There are ways to prevent this problem, however. The mall attendants on Portland Mall carry scrapers and remove gum off the new bricks every day. Considering the major investment represented in capital improvements to streets, it is appropriate to protect that investment with this kind of care.

While there are many levels to city maintenance, the type of maintenance that concerns the downtown organization include: street and sidewalk sweeping, washing and repair; street furniture repair; care of plantings; snow removal; garbage pick-up; replacing signage; and general beautification projects, such as wall murals and painting over graffiti. Example projects in these areas are described below.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

Downtown organizations across the country have responded to maintenance problems with a wide variety of programs and strategies. These programs range from low-cost, almost voluntary efforts, to highly sophisticated, high budget operations. The level of a downtown organization's involvement is dependent on available funds, responsiveness of the city government to downtown problems, and whether such improvements as pedestrian malls have been constructed. The following list of programs is presented from least to most costly.

Low-Cost Programs

The most inexpensive way to improve downtown maintenance is to work with merchants, property owners and corporations to increase their area of concern around their stores and buildings. In this way, the "zone of benefit" is directly related to the establishment which is doing the work. Over one half of the organizations which PPS surveyed stated that they actively encouraged businesses to maintain sidewalks. Although it is difficult to evaluate how much improvement come from these efforts,

it is necessary to begin with this type of program. The effort essentially requires having a staff member of the downtown organization on the street almost every day, talking with merchants, shoppers and property owners, and pointing out problems and solutions. The Downtown Council in Hartford recently hired a street manager to perform this function in November 1982, though it is still too early to evaluate how effective she has been in encouraging merchants to clean their sidewalks.

Other types of low-cost maintenance improvements include changing the location of trash receptacles, changing times of street cleaning and trash pick-up, encouraging businesses to sponsor trash receptacles, and other general beautification efforts. Many downtown organizations also spend time lobbying for better enforcement of city sanitation codes and increased city services. All of these efforts essentially require someone to take initiative and generate support within the downtown community.

Medium to High-Cost Programs

While the low-cost beautification and lobbying efforts are important, they are usually dependent on voluntary efforts and, therefore, not dependable for a more comprehensive approach, which may be necessary. This chapter is more concerned with the sophisticated large-scale programs which many downtown organizations have established. These programs include hiring special staff to perform additional maintenance activities in specific areas.

For instance, in Portland, Maine, Intown Portland Associates hires two full-time people to sweep downtown sidewalks at 6 AM before the public works streetcleaner arrives. The organization had noticed that the problem was partly caused by a mismatch of scheduling. The merchants had been sweeping litter into the gutter when they came to work, after the street cleaner had already done the street.

The Lincoln Center Association in Lincoln, Nebraska, takes their maintenance program further by establishing a maintenance district downtown. The property owners are assessed to cover the budget for a foreman and a crew of four people who take care of shrubs, trees, street furniture, trash cans, etc. on a daily basis within the boundaries of the District.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, the private sector agreed to raise \$100,000 a year to cover maintenance costs for a new mall. The program was established for the first three years after the mall was built and is now part of the proposed services for a special tax assessment district. Downtown Tulsa Unlimited, Inc., has a seven-man crew which takes care of mall maintenance and

landscaping on a day-to-day basis. A private contractor is hired to wash down the sidewalks at night with a special truck. Laborers are paid at or just above minimum wage. (One half of the budget goes to labor costs.)

The Fulton Mall Improvement Association in Brooklyn, New York, carries the concept of supplementing maintenance services even further. A special tax assessment on all properties located within the Mall District covers the cost of a number of special programs including \$170,000 for cleaning, sweeping and general maintenance of the Mall by a private contractor, \$2,000 for refuse disposal and a \$10,000 maintenance contingency fund. These fees are for seven day maintenance of sidewalks and street furniture of a three-block pedestrian mall.

Some downtown organizations have recognized that maintenance is a problem that must be tackled from many fronts throughout the downtown. The Downtown Committee of Syracuse in Syracuse, New York, has a Director of Environmental Maintenance on staff who oversees a maintenance crew of two paid employees and five CETA workers who supplement the city's street cleaning efforts. The Downtown Committee has concentrated on encouraging compliance with city ordinances with respect to cleaning and maintaining sidewalks and other public areas around each property. The Committee has also contracted with a private firm for the feeding, pruning and spraying of trees. The City Department of Parks and Recreation monitored the contract, replaced dead trees, and installed tree grates where necessary. While this type of effort has been successful, the dependence on CETA workers has made the program tenuous and subject to changes in federal policy.

The Downtown Development District in New Orleans also runs an extensive program with \$170,000 devoted to sanitation services for the downtown such as a six-day garbage collection, street cleaning and washing, and emptying of litter receptacles; \$20,000 is devoted to a landscape maintenance program. These services are part of an almost-million-dollar budget raised in a special tax assessment district in the downtown. All of these services are provided as over and above the city's traditional services. Under the program, twenty-two additional privately-funded workers clean the CBD daily, an additional street sweeper cleans each street downtown daily, and trash collection has been increased from three to six times weekly. While the program is successful in keeping the streets cleaner, a problem arises each year with the merchants demanding even more sanitation services and the city attempting to reduce its own level of service delivery. Thus, the sanitation program expands each year, taking up a bigger portion of the budget.

While there are many examples in other cities where additional sanitation and maintenance services are used to supplement normal city services, most of them are piecemeal. PPS has observed crews at work in many cities, but by far the most effective and innovative maintenance program is on the Portland, Oregon, Mall. The city hires two mall attendants as "human resource people" as well as cleaners. Although they are paid more than the average street cleaner (\$15,000/year), they do much more. The two attendants sweep and clean the brick sidewalks and street furniture for the full length of the 5th and 6th Street Transit Mall (both sides, twelve blocks). They maintain the area at an extremely high level of cleanliness by scraping gum off of the brick, sweeping around bus shelters and seating, and even polishing the tops of trash receptacles. They wear bright colored jackets and have carts with everything from maps and bus schedules to aspirin for the pedestrian with a headache. They usually make four trips a day, up and down the street. Most people who use the street know them, and seem to like what they are doing. At the same time they offer a constant presence on the street for security, answer questions, and give directions.

The Portland Mall attendants are backed up by two privately-contracted maintenance crews. One crew cleans and washes the bus shelters once a day, while another crew washes down the brick on the mall every night. The city also has a full-time gardener to take care of the plants and to regularly change flowers in the almost 125 pots on the city's sidewalks. The city also has a policy of replacing and repairing broken street fixtures or paving immediately. City representatives believe that their preventive maintenance techniques have greatly reduced problems with vandalism.

Portland has created a maintenance program which has many other benefits than just keeping a street clean. The two mall attendants serve as "mayors" of the street, taking responsibility for assuring that the street provides a more comfortable and safer environment for everyone who uses it. Admittedly, Portland has the advantage of being small, compact, and more demographically homogeneous than many cities in the United States. However, the maintenance program on the mall is a fine example of how attention to detail--from washing pay telephone mouth pieces every day to calking expansion joints between granite slabs--can make an important difference in downtown maintenance.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING A MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

The following questions need to be answered in order to determine the appropriate program for downtown:

- o Where are the problems of low-level or non-existent maintenance most evident in the downtown? On the sidewalks? In front of certain buildings? In parks and plazas?
- o What type of problems are most troublesome? Is there a real or perceptual problem with litter? Are planter and trees watered, cleaned, fertilized, pruned and replaced? Do surveys of merchants, pedestrians, and office workers reveal different attitudes towards cleanliness?
- o Who performs what services now? What are the city's schedules for services? How are needed repairs inspected and reported? Do current city services respond to levels of activity in different areas at different times of the day? Are sanitation ordinances actively enforced? What areas do private sector maintenance crews cover?
- o Can the existing services be expanded, reorganized, or rescheduled to be more effective? Does the city need to send its crews at a particular time? Can the city assign special attendants to the downtown? Can large property owners expand their maintenance efforts to a wider area?
- o What new services should be introduced into the downtown? Is there a need for more of a maintenance presence on the streets of the downtown? Should the private sector provide services over and above what the city is now providing? Is there a paramount need to show that something is being done so that more substantial types of improvements can get the support of the downtown community?

Security

OVERVIEW

The issue of security in downtown goes beyond dealing with crime: it is a question of making downtown a safe, secure place where people feel comfortable to shop or work, and where businesses feel confident to operate. A security program for downtown must deal with both the actual crime problems of downtown (primarily burglary and shoplifting) but also with the factors that affect people's perception of crime and safety. Very often, the presence of undesirables, the location of an empty, unlighted area, or the lack of a person who seems to be "official" causes people to have highly exaggerated fears about the safety of downtown, relative to the actual crime statistics. Those fears affect their decisions about where to shop, where to work, and where to locate a business.

A common approach to downtown security problems is increased police foot patrols. Ironically, research has shown that this strategy may not reduce crime rates. One study in Nashville found that the cost of patrolling required to have even a minimal effect on burglary rates (a small decrease at nighttime) was absolutely prohibitive.

The real benefit of increased police foot patrol is that it can contribute to people's perception of safety. This is critical in downtown areas since continued vitality and prosperity depends on attracting shoppers, tourists and businesses into downtown. A controlled experiment in Newark found that in neighborhoods where police switched from car patrol to foot patrol, residents felt more secure than persons in other areas, tended to believe that crime had been reduced, and seemed to take fewer steps to protect themselves from crime. Furthermore, citizens also had a more favorable opinion of the police, and officers walking beats had higher morale, greater job satisfaction, and a more favorable attitude towards citizens.

This study also pointed out that there is an "inextricable link" between a "sense of order" and serious crime. An area where no one is in charge, and where there are no active controls on what is appropriate behavior is more vulnerable to crime. In places where people feel confident that they can regulate public behavior by informal controls with help from a person in charge, it is less likely that undesirable activities will take place.

Unfortunately, many cities have taken an opposite approach: downtown has become a fortress with new buildings oriented towards the interior instead of the street, and with tight control over access. While these strategies have been somewhat effective in preventing burglary and making people feel safe once they are inside, they may be counterproductive in the long run since they often do little to make people outside comfortable to walk, shop, and do business. These security-conscious buildings only react to security problems, instead of focusing on the overall goal of making downtown a safe place to be.

As a rule, then, there is no one strategy that can address the broad range of security issues in downtown. A comprehensive approach with several different types of program is generally required, depending upon the severity of the problem. Police patrols which respond to actual crime are one part of the picture. Police officers patrol a wide area by car, deal with emergencies, report crime, and apprehend criminals. Another equally important type of security service in downtown is some sort of official presence on the street. There needs to be some identifiable person who deals with day to day operations and events, responds to "mini-emergencies," provides information, deals with undesirables, and generally keeps order in the area and makes people feel comfortable. Depending on the particular context, this person can be a policeman on foot patrol, or a private guard, a vendor, a maintenance worker, or even the storeowners themselves. Private security guards provide yet another necessary security service in downtown, focusing on surveillance within individual properties or buildings. Finally, there must be a strategy for the design and activity of the public spaces and buildings in the downtown. The physical layout of downtown and the location of activity has a dramatic impact on security. A coordinated strategy is needed not only to discourage or prevent criminal activity, but also to displace the undesirable activity which makes downtown users feel uncomfortable.

The choice and development of strategies, described below, must be based on a thorough understanding of types of spaces in downtown, the number and types of people, types of security problems, and the types of activity at different times of the day. All of these variables must not only be considered, but must be recognized as being constantly in flux.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

A wide variety of programs have been developed around the country which address different security issues of downtown. The major categories of programs include: public/private task forces on crime; restructuring or supplementing security patrol services; building security surveys and environmental design review; activity programming; and public information campaigns on crime prevention.

Public/Private Task Forces on Crime Prevention

A critical first step in the development of a security program is the establishment of regular communication channels between all the actors involved in downtown security issues, including merchants, the police department, city officials, private security forces, city planners, and the public. This can be initiated through existing organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, a merchants association, or the City Council, or a special task force can be created.

One exemplary program was initiated in Cleveland by the Cleveland Growth Association, the city's leading private-sector development entity. Through an initial survey, they discovered that although relatively few crimes took place in the central business district, citizens' perception of crime in the downtown area were damaging to the city's economy. To address the problem, the Association identified key police and business persons with vested interests in downtown security to work on a downtown security committee. After obtaining a small state grant, the group conducted a study of crime and fear in downtown, worked with experts to develop anti-crime and anti-fear measures, and went on to monitor the results for application in other parts of the city.

Special task forces are sometimes formed to deal with a crime issue which is very specific to the location or type of business. In Houston, for example, the Chamber of Commerce formed special subcommittees of police, fire, and business officials to develop programs for heavy equipment theft, cargo theft of gas and oil, and arson.

Security Patrol

Increased security foot patrol is the most common strategy used to deal with downtown security issues. Cities around the country have developed different programs which range from low-cost reorganization of existing staff to a higher-cost program funded by a special assessment district for additional security services. It is important to first look carefully at existing resources. For

example, the Downtown Council in Hartford discovered that, while there were no foot patrols in downtown, there were some 150 private security guards who supervise building interiors.

In order to increase the effectiveness of existing police services in downtown, some cities have switched from squad car patrol to foot patrol. This increases the visibility of the police on downtown streets, and brings them more into contact with the public and concerned merchants. Several cities, including Miami, Boston, Providence and Atlanta have put their downtown police on horse-back to increase their visibility. Other cities have found that, by offering free coffee and rolls in coffee shops, the police tend to be more visible throughout the day.

Another strategy which proved to be very effective in Cincinnati and elsewhere is neighborhood team policing. When the delivery of police services was decentralized so that one team of officers were responsible around the clock for crime control and police services within a specific area of the community, crime was reduced, and police/community relations improved.

Assigning special police officers to work in downtown on specific types of problems is another strategy which is appropriate in some cities. In Lincoln, Nebraska, there is a special police officer for alcohol-related offenses who can spot problems, make arrests, and coordinate prosecution. Cities or merchant groups will sometimes establish special enforcement measures to deal with shoplifting and pickpocketing, especially during peak seasons. Merchants and downtown businessmen have in many cases convinced city government to supply additional or special police services in downtown simply by lobbying the mayor or city council. In cities where budget cutbacks have substantially reduced public resources, however, the private sector has often helped in funding security programs. A special assessment district was established in downtown New Orleans, with a portion of the revenues earmarked for providing extra police downtown. The extra police are strategically assigned to maximize visibility and reduce crime. This police contingent consists of 10 patrolmen and one supervising sergeant. The cost to the District is \$250,000 per year.

In a few cities, downtown business councils and merchant organizations have begun to hire off-duty policemen or other personnel to work as "managers" or "guards" in downtown. They function essentially to maintain order in downtown, offer assistance or information, and supervise day-to-day operations and events. This type of "mayor" for downtown can have a very positive effect on the public's perception of crime. One of the best examples of this type of program exists in Rockefeller Center in New York City.

Guards wear a Rockefeller Center uniform and are stationed throughout the complex. Their job is to give information, supervise crowds and special events, call for maintenance and repairs when necessary, deal with any emergencies that arise (including summoning the police if necessary), and generally to maintain order. Surveys conducted at Rockefeller Center indicate that the sense of security and safety is a major attracting feature for both tourists, and for companies renting office space there. Other cities where similar personnel have been hired include Jamaica, Queens, and Syracuse, New York.

In some cases, other personnel can perform these "mayoral" functions. In the Portland transit mall for example, both mall maintenance workers and vendors who are out on the mall all day serve as managers of the mall. While cleaning up or selling goods, they also keep an eye out for any problems which might require police attention.

Environmental Design Security

Physical design features of buildings and of the public areas throughout downtown affect crime rates and also the perception of crime. For example, a parking lot located in a secluded area may be a staging area for crime, or the rear of a park may be a hangout for undesirables because there are no surrounding commercial establishments to generate other activity there. Many strategies can be used to reduce the opportunities for crime which are inherent in the structure of the buildings and the layout of the public spaces downtown.

The most common strategy which cities have used is the building security survey. Police departments analyze commercial buildings that have been burglarized in downtown and then recommend improvements and security systems which would make the building less vulnerable to burglary. In Atlanta, this program was instituted as part of an overall "target hardening or opportunity reduction" program. (Other strategies included operation identification and an emergency contact system for business owners.) Commercial burglary decreased 12.7%, and commercial robbery decreased 41.7%. The city of Oakland, California, has also instituted a security ordinance in downtown, requiring businesses to retrofit their buildings according to specified security standards.

An effective program for reducing overall crime rates and making people safe in downtown must address environmental design issues more comprehensively, however. A joint committee of city planners, merchants, and building owners should do a thorough inventory of the unsafe or inactive areas of downtown where problems occur (or people perceive that problems occur.) Design or management changes can be developed to increase activity and visibility in

these areas. Actions may require minimal changes such as trimming a hedge of shrubbery that surrounds a park to allow for greater visibility.

The trend towards designing interior-oriented buildings, with few or no commercial uses fronting on the street and very tight control of access, may be counterproductive to the long-term security of downtown. Such design brings most activity inside of the building, and makes the surrounding public spaces of downtown more conducive to undesirable behavior. Both the city and the private sector should be involved in reviewing the design of new buildings to insure that at the ground level there is activity, visibility, and a strong relation to the street.

Activity Programming

Another type of security strategy involves "programming" the space. One of the most effective ways to remove "undesirables," and the associated security concerns, is to increase the proportion of "desirable." There are many different ways of achieving this. One common approach is called activity programming and involves establishing an event or function of some sort that will attract a large crowd of people that find interest in that particular event. For example, scheduling noontime classical music or jazz concerts in a downtown park to attract office workers is often an effective way to displace loitering, drug dealing, or the presence of undesirables.

Such events can be strategically planned to generate activity in areas which are particularly inactive, or to generate activity at inactive times of the day, for example during mid-afternoon, after 5 PM, or on Saturdays. On-going activity programming can also be used to increase security, including vending, cafes, farmers markets, and other outdoor sales events. (These are discussed in a separate chapter of this handbook.)

One of the best examples of successful activity programming and environmental design security is Exxon Park in New York City. In 1978, this minipark was not actively used by downtown workers, and had become a center for undesirables and drug dealing. A redesign and management plan for the park, prepared by PPS, added new seating, a cafe, and vendors, increased the visibility of the park from the street, and instituted a regular program of events and entertainment. The use of the park has increased threefold, with more elderly and women users, and the drug dealing and undesirables have been displaced.

Public Information Campaigns

Public information campaigns can be used to educate merchants about crime prevention techniques, as well as to educate the public about precautions they can take to avoid being crime victims. Cities like St. Louis and San Diego have developed promotional campaigns followed up with special seminars to educate merchants about the specific security problems in downtown and the steps they can take to prevent burglary, robbery, and shoplifting in their stores. In Dayton, Ohio, the merchant association has begun publishing a monthly neighborhood crime watch report which details what crime activity has recently taken place and what to look out for in terms of suspects, theft techniques, bad checks, etc.

Information campaigns aimed at the public have focused on warnings regarding shoplifting or pickpocketing, or encouragements to use particular safe pedestrian routes. New York City has developed an extensive public information campaign for the subways and buses on "how to take the bite out of crime." In Portland, Oregon, the city developed a series of posters encouraging consumers to carry less cash when they come downtown.

Many of the educational and promotional campaigns focus specifically on shoplifting because this is the most prevalent crime in downtown, and one of the most concern to merchants. The National Coalition to Prevent Shoplifting has compiled extensive inventory of research on effective techniques to deal with shoplifting. Regular seminars for merchants and their employees can help to control the problem.

Other innovative strategies can be used, particularly during peak shopping seasons. In Fargo, North Dakota, a pyramid calling system was set up during Christmas where businesses could immediately spread critical information on shoplifters throughout downtown. Lechmere stores in Dayton, Ohio, set up a program where employees were given cash bonuses for helping to catch shoplifters. Neiman-Marcus in Texas notes that hiring off-duty policemen is effective since they know the downtown area, shoplifting techniques, and even the area's professional shoplifters.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING A SECURITY PROGRAM

Developing an effective security program for downtown requires a thorough understanding of the security issues in downtown as well as an understanding of the types of spaces, activity, and land uses in the area. The following list of questions are among those which should be considered in developing a security program:

- o What are the different types of security problems that exist in downtown, and when and where do they occur? What do the crime statistics show in terms of burglary, robbery, shoplifting, violent crime? Are there "undesirables" that hang out in downtown?
- o How do people perceive security in downtown? What are the perceptions of merchants, employees, shoppers, tourists, and city residents who choose not to come downtown? How often do these groups come downtown? What do they come downtown for--only to work or do they also come for shopping, eating, and entertainment? How safe do they feel downtown? What do they perceive to be the major security problems?
- o How does the design of buildings and public spaces affect crime and the perception of crime? Where are the major activity generators and major circulation routes? Where are the areas with the heaviest activity? At what times of day are they active? Are there areas that are empty or underutilized at certain times of the day--vacant lots, parking lots, etc.?
- o What types of uses and activities are at the ground levels facing onto public spaces in downtown? Are these uses or activities able to exert control over these spaces? Which spaces or areas do people perceive to be unsafe, and why?
- o What types of security protection exists now in downtown? Who provides security services? What different types of security measures have been tried? Have they been effective at reducing crime rates or changing the perception of crime?
- o Who are the actors with an active interest in downtown security, and what combined resources do they have available to address security issues? Groups to contact include: merchants, the police department, city officials, city planners, private business organizations, and federal or state government law enforcement agencies.

Transportation Management

OVERVIEW

In many downtowns, transportation problems often seem insurmountable. There never seems to be enough parking, or wide enough streets to accommodate existing vehicle volumes. At the same time, it is often difficult and expensive to maintain an effective public transportation system which is essential to the functioning of most larger cities.

Planning, design and management of various downtown transportation systems (public transit, traffic control and parking) are traditional services provided by the public sector in most cities. However, service delivery in these areas has been made increasingly complex by the involvement of multiple levels of federal, state, county and city agencies which all have jurisdiction or funding power over different aspects of the downtown's transportation system. Furthermore, recent budget cuts at the federal level have jeopardized or ended many innovative local transportation programs.

Most downtown organizations do not have the staffing, financial resources or expertise to directly implement most types of transportation improvements. The established agencies such as public works, departments of transportation, and transit authorities, are the major decision-makers and will ultimately determine the priorities for funding different transportation programs. However, there are examples of downtown organizations initiating transportation planning studies, participating in ad hoc transportation committees, and vigorously supporting or opposing different types of transportation improvements. In PPS's survey of downtown organizations, over 60% of the respondents stated that they got involved with bus routing, transportation planning or transit promotion. In some cases, the downtown organization actually initiated or funded a capital improvement project or promotional campaign.

The types of improvements with which downtown organizations can get most involved come under the heading of "Transportation Systems Management" (TSM). The U.S. Department of Transportation introduced TSM as a comprehensive approach to solving the multi-faceted problems of moving people, goods and vehicles in urban areas, and include such programs as downtown shuttle buses, ridesharing, pedestrian and transit malls, parking management, designated truck routes, and incentives for using public transit. While many of the TSM programs are innovative and potentially produce excellent results, it is not the intention of this report to provide background information in this already well-

documented field. Our concern here is to provide information on how a downtown organization may become involved in transportation issues as part of its comprehensive approach to downtown public space management.

To improve the overall comfort, safety and appearance of streets and public spaces, downtown organizations should seek to facilitate traffic flow, accomodate parked vehicles, improve transit efficiency, and enhance the pedestrian shopping environment. A downtown organization which represents the interests of the business community is in a good position to look broadly at all transportation problems and potentials. The organization can bridge the distance between traffic engineers and transit operators where viewpoint is more limited, and involve the private sector who benefits from effective transportation for shoppers and workers.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

Downtown organizations across the United States have initiated or helped make improvements in several areas of downtown transportation management usually in cooperation with city agencies. In some cases, the downtown organization covered several areas of concern, while in others the organization only contributed by attending planning meetings.

Advocacy

Involvement in transportation issues begins with an advisory role for a staff member of the downtown organization. The downtown organization determines the major concerns of the downtown community and represents those interests on planning committees. This type of involvement does not necessarily require special staffing or increased budgets. While most organizations allocate only a small percentage of their budget to these efforts, the Bellevue Downtown Association in Bellevue, Washington, spends most of its \$85,000 budget which is raised through membership dues on working with city and regional transit agencies to develop a downtown transit center, ridesharing, van pools and transit pass subsidies.

Ridesharing

Another low cost improvement involves promotional programs to reduce the number of cars being driven into the downtown every day. A downtown organization may recognize the problems of vehicle congestion and insufficient parking spaces created by the suburban commuters, and advocate the use of carpooling or van pooling. For instance, in San Diego, the city's corporations encourage van pooling by buying special vans for their employees;

the city designates spaces for parking and the state Department of Transportation uses computers to match people with existing van routes. In Madison, Wisconsin the city has been giving interest free loans for vans and designating parking lots for vans since 1977.

Outlying Parking Areas and Shuttle Buses

In order to encourage commuters not to drive their cars into the downtown, a downtown organization may advocate the use of parking areas located outside of the downtown and support or provide a shuttle bus to the center of downtown. For instance, in New Orleans the Downtown Development District (DDD) subsidized since 1977 a shuttle bus to downtown from a parking lot on the boundary of the central Business District. The DDD budgeted over \$100,000 in 1980 for the subsidy of the shuttle bus program which charged only twenty-five cents for the ride. According to DDD the program was highly visible, but costly. The local utility companies have recently taken over the program.

Parking Validation

Although the downtown organization may actively advocate reducing suburban commuter vehicles, it usually wants to encourage suburban shoppers to come downtown and park. Many organizations coordinate or fund parking validation programs -- which usually provides discounted or free parking in return for purchasing a specified amount of goods in downtown stores. For instance, in Lincoln, Nebraska, any member of the Lincoln Center Association can purchase validation stamps for 30¢. When a customer makes a purchase of \$5.00 or more, he or she is eligible for one validation stamp which permits one hour of free parking or one free bus ride. The Association, under contract with the bus system, reimburses the bus company or garage for 27¢ and puts the remaining 3¢ into an advertising fund for the program. This program would obviously be more expensive in a larger city where the first hour at a garage may cost between \$3.00 and \$5.00. For instance, the San Diego organization discontinued its validation program because parking lot owners did not like the way it was administered. Similar opposition to validation programs is found in many cities.

Parking Management

Parking management improvements have been primarily initiated by downtown development districts. They have applied the following strategies in order to solve their parking problems:

- o removal of parking meters to eliminate the fear of being fined for illegal parking (Grand Junction, Colorado)

- o improvement of the physical condition of off-street parking lots (Englewood, Colorado)
- o creation of parking validation programs in cooperation with downtown merchants (Redlands, Ca., Syracuse, N.Y.)
- o construction of new parking facilities (Flint, Michigan)
- o creation of a special parking district with its own special assessment tax which is located within the larger downtown development district (Fargo, N.D.; Englewood, Colo.; Grand Junction, Colo.)

Merchants and/or property owners in each development district took organizational and financial responsibility for solving their downtown parking problems. Whether the need for additional parking was real or perceived, managers of downtown development districts realized that the shopper's perception of the situation is as legitimate as the reality of the situation. Even though there may be adequate parking facilities, improved access and signage can help solve parking problems.

Capital Improvements

The involvement of downtown organizations in capital improvements such as: transit malls, sidewalk widenings and other pedestrian/transit improvements are described in the chapter, "Designing Public Space Improvements," in this handbook.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING A TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

- o Who wants to come downtown? Employees, shoppers, tourists? How do they get there now?
- o What problems do people say they have? How do people rate parking, quality of bus service, efficiency of traffic, comfort in waiting for the bus? Do perceptions vary according to merchants, shoppers, downtown employees, corporate and city office leaders?
- o How does "reality" compare with people's perceptions? For example, how much parking is available? What is its turnover? When is traffic congestion a problem? What is the on-time record of bus services?
- o What special transportation programs are feasible? How much money for capital improvements versus program funds are available? Are the funds required to administer a program justified in terms of the number of people who can be served? How can existing city resources be used to make low-cost changes in downtown?

CREATING A DOWNTOWN MARKETPLACE

Most downtown organizations have been promoting their own downtowns for years. In fact, the promotional campaigns to improve the image of downtown and to bring back the estranged suburbanite have been very successful in many cities. The Downtown Council's "Beat of Hartford" and the State Street Council's "That Great Street" in Chicago represent some of the more sophisticated examples. Unfortunately, all too few downtown organizations aggressively follow-up their downtown image campaigns with actual improvements in the downtown shopping environment. There is often great disparity between the promise for excitement in sophisticated promotions and the uninspiring storefronts, poor merchandising and minimal customer service which typically greets the downtown shopper.

In order to develop management strategies for improving the retail environment in a downtown it is helpful to look for clues from the competition--the suburban mall. The suburban or regional shopping mall has the advantage over a downtown in terms of a high level of organization and control over activities in the public spaces, and over tenant location, merchandising and store design. Marketing and promotion of the suburban mall as a whole is funded by an assessment on each store. Usually, a promotions coordinator organizes joint promotions, special events and the development of an identifiable image. Merchants in the mall coordinate buying and marketing activities, and plan sales and free entertainment within an overall mall promotion schedule.

It is no wonder that downtown retail has a hard time competing. A downtown organization can never achieve the same level of organization as mall managers because they lack the control over tenants, leases, and access. But downtown retailing should not try to emulate mall design or management. It should offer an alternative which accentuates the excitement of the urban experience rather than trying to diminish it.

When one thinks about fun places to shop in cities, it is difficult not to think of the following places: Pike Street Market in Seattle; the Cannery in San Francisco; Faneuil Hall in Boston; and Harborplace in Baltimore. These are all unique, exciting places. Admittedly, they have the advantage of being privately managed but they have certain qualities in common. They all offer a variety of activities and events in their public spaces, and

a wide selection of things to look at and do when browsing or window shopping. There are food vendors, jugglers and performers, and places to sit and watch. There is also a conscious design decision made to concentrate people and activities in certain areas, building up excitement and the feeling of being in a marketplace.

In downtowns, building the excitement of a marketplace is dependent on what takes place in the public spaces--in the streets, plazas and sidewalks of the downtown. Some of the most exciting commercial streets in downtowns are full of food vendors, cafes, street musicians, entertainers, exciting display windows. This type of excitement is clearly evident and happens spontaneously in New York City on Fifth Avenue, Columbus Avenue, and many other commercial streets both in the U.S. and abroad. In the downtowns of less densely populated cities, it has to be supported and created in a concentrated area.

"Creating a Downtown Marketplace" is a new idea for most privately-supported downtown organizations. Many downtown organizations do provide assistance to retailers, and consider the strengthening of retail in their downtowns as a major objective. However, few organizations take the initiative to boldly introduce and manage the elements which will make the downtown's public spaces more active, festive, and enjoyable for shopping. Many of these new strategies are really based on old ideas from cities, such as: bringing back food vendors and pushcarts on the streets; getting restaurants to put tables and chairs outside; creating again the traditional farmers' markets; and scheduling musicians, entertainers, and shows at times when people are looking for something to do outside. The difference is that these traditional urban, very "European" activities are managed and controlled by the downtown organization or the city with the intention of improving the downtown's vitality and retail viability. Downtown organizations are often in a good position to play both the entrepreneurial role of initiating programs and the more bureaucratic role of regulating permits for vendors, cafes, kiosks, festivals, fairs, farmers' markets, street musicians and other forms of outdoor entertainment.

Before describing examples of such programs, some of the ways in which downtown organizations help strengthen the existing retail block will first be considered.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS IN GENERAL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Market Profile

Many downtown organizations recognize that downtown merchants have been slow to respond to changes in their customers, and the market in general. Often, merchants fail to see a potential turnaround in business after years of experiencing a constant decline in sales. Downtown organizations such as Intown Portland Associates in Maine and the State Street Council in Chicago have conducted marketing studies in order to assess changes in the downtown's market demographics and to identify potential new types of stores, services and promotions for the downtown. While this type of market study should be helpful to merchants, many organizations, including Intown Portland Associates, report that merchants are "short-sighted and apathetic" in terms of reacting to the market data.

The State Street Council conducted its own merchant study, analyzing all available recorded data to determine the market characteristics and demographic composition of area customers. The study identified a potential target group of women between 35 and 55 and all adults between 25 and 65 years of age, with an emphasis on families with a per capita income of more than \$20,000 per year. The State Street Council initiated an advertising campaign aimed at this target group. The State Street Council believes that the success of this campaign can be documented in the increase in sales figures on the street.

Retail Development

Understanding who the downtown retailer can attract can be an early step in establishing programs for improving the shopping environment. Another step is to become a catalyst for developing more retail in the downtown. The downtown organization that is concerned about retail needs to develop programs for filling vacant stores, replacing low inventory or minimal stores, and assuring a continuity and concentration of ground level retail on several streets. Since the organization does not have the control over tenants as found in a shopping mall, it is dependent on its ability to work closely with the merchants, realtors and developers to attract new business and keep stores on the street level.

For instance, The Downtown Development Corporation of Rochester, New York, has developed a data base on downtown retail space which includes availability of properties, rental rates, types of current retail uses in downtown, level of retail sales and any other pertinent information that will help the corporation serve as a clearinghouse for developers and individual retailers. The Corporation is developing this program as a response to the current lack of information on the downtown. While the Corporation believes that this program has helped it to maintain a consistent level of exposure in the downtown, it is not sure that it has actually helped to enhance retail activity.

The Downtown Development Authority in Bay City, Michigan, is another example of an organization making real estate information available to developers. The Authority inventories vacant space and has developed a "welcome wagon" package for potential tenants which describes current available space, cost and potential customers based on a consultant's marketing study.

Some organizations have developed very innovative strategies for filling the vacant stores which are a liability to the street. Some of them encourage other merchants to use vacant storefront space for advertising and displaying merchandise. In Willingboro, New Jersey, a large grocery store was converted to an open market for 175 vendors who sell their wares on a part-time basis in a prime location for minimal rent.

Other retail development alternatives include: storefront renovation, improved signage, better product merchandising and a more attractive retail mix of stores in a particular location. Most downtown organizations commit minimal staff time and a small percentage of their operating budget to improvements in these areas. Several national organizations such as the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Development Council in Washington, D.C., have been training downtown managers to initiate Main Street improvements in small towns. Many of these programs may be applicable to the commercial streets of the larger city downtowns. However, in this handbook, we are essentially concerned with introducing and managing activities in the downtown public spaces which will create a better shopping environment.

Activity Programming

OVERVIEW

Programming of special events and programs--parades, street fairs, sidewalk sales, ethnic festivals--are a common activity of downtown organizations. Events range from specific shopper promotions to programs intended to create a different image for downtown and to counter people who think downtown is "dead."

Activity programming is often considered as something which is done just for its own value, however, rather than as an integrated component of a total downtown improvement effort. A well-planned event will consider where activity is needed, when, what size, and whom is to be attracted. Activity programming can become, therefore, a management tool to attract people to places that are otherwise underutilized, to attract people who might not ordinarily come downtown at a certain time, or just to brighten up and provide surprises for people on a routine shopping trip.

Activity programming has many benefits that are not usually considered. Activity, as the chapter on "Security" above describes, contributes to people's perception of safety in a downtown. Cultural events can also promote local talent and provide an opportunity for different arts organizations to work together. This creates networks of people who might not have had a chance to know or work with each other, a situation which may have larger benefits after the event has been staged. Finally, events can introduce different parts of a downtown to people. For instance, in Seattle's Out-to-Lunch program, which is described below in more detail, 87% of the people surveyed at four different events in different locations stated that this program had introduced them to areas which they had not visited before, and 73% stated that they patronized a downtown business on the way to the event.

There are several ingredients to successful event programs in a downtown, ingredients which, as one coordinator put it, are the same as if you were personally throwing a "good party."

- o People have to know about it, either through publicity (newspapers, radios, corporate newsletters, flyers, posters) or through the predictable fact that an event always takes place at a certain time.
- o The event has to be well organized, with someone in charge of it on an ongoing basis. For "Party in the Park," described

below, it took all week to organize the first ones; later it took only a few hours.

- o The event has to be coordinated with other downtown activities, such as sales days and retail openings, as well as with other groups who might stage an event.
- o Events should be appropriate to the space where they are located. Many details must be considered: where people will sit, the number that can be accommodated, the location of the stage in terms of visibility and direction of the sun, and technical requirements for sound systems, lighting and water.
- o Events should have good talent. Again, the different types of talent will tend to attract different clienteles, something that should be considered from the very beginning.

Finally, it should be emphasized that there are many options in terms of the frequency of events, their locations, and their size. For example, a major extravaganza-style festival is something that can probably only be arranged once a year and might use every available space in the downtown. On the other hand, street musicians take up very little space and can perform on a daily basis. Ideally, it should be possible to "choreograph" a diverse selection of entertainment throughout the warm months of the year: a major event or two, regularly-scheduled programs in parks and plazas, and daily street entertainers and performers.

This chapter does not deal with the logistics involved with planning major, one-time or annual events. These kinds of festivals are complex, and much information is already available on them from other sources. The example programs which follow deal with two types of event programs: street performers and regularly-scheduled events.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

Street Performers

Street performers--mimes and musicians, mainly--provide special opportunities in terms of event programming. They require little space, except if they attract a large crowd, and they cost little money. Like vending, street performers can be controlled through a licensing or permit procedure, which allows the downtown organization to regulate where, when, and how frequently performances may take place.

In both Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco and Faneuil Hall in Boston, street entertainers are auditioned and granted permits by the management. This allows the musicians or actors to perform, after which they can "pass the hat." While this sort of entertainment is rather rare in downtowns, there are examples. In the Jamaica, Queens, Farmers' Market, organized by the Greater Jamaica Development Corporations, for example, mimes imitated people buying vegetables. Similarly, in Hartford, mimes were used to sweep sidewalks as part of a downtown clean-up campaign. Needless to say, the mimes attracted a great deal of attention!

Regularly Scheduled Events

One of the better examples of regular downtown activity programming is the Greater Cleveland Growth Association's "Party in the Park." It is held every Friday during the summer between the hours of 5:00 and 8:00 PM in a different section of the downtown each time. Its purpose is to keep people downtown after working hours. It usually draws an average crowd of 12,000 people to listen to live music and drink beer sold for 25¢ per glass. "Party in the Park," which has been going for eight years, grossed \$60,000 (in 1979) and netted \$15,000 from the sale of beer. The coordinator of the program relies on 40-100 volunteers from different non-profit groups each week to sell beer tickets and tap kegs; these groups then receive the profits of that day. A major function of the "Party" is the exposure to businesses in the area. People who attend the events may be seeing a different part of the city which they would not normally go to.

Seattle's "Out-to-Lunch" program is similar in concept, but much larger in scope. Coordinated by the Downtown Seattle Development Association, the Out-to-Lunch program provides music, dance or theater on every day of the summer, between the months of June and September at 14 different plazas or parks in the downtown. Recently, the program has been expanded to include events in the evening. Out-to-Lunch is supported by contributions from 38 downtown businesses, the City of Seattle, the federal General Services Administration, and the American Federation of Musicians.

"Out-to-Lunch" attracts an estimated 70,000 people of all ages annually to its concerts which range from 40-piece concert bands to seven-piece rock and roll groups. The monthly flyers which provide the schedule of events include a map of the downtown showing the different plazas and parks which are participants. At each event a large yellow blimp with "Out-to-Lunch" printed on it is flown overhead.

"Out-to-Lunch" is an exciting program but requires a great deal of organizational work. One staff person at the Downtown Seattle Development Association devotes most of his time for 4-6 months to coordinate the program. It also relies on the cooperation and commitment of many other individuals on the "Out-to-Lunch" committee. The program operates on a \$25,000 budget which is donated by local corporations and businesses. However, it is also dependent on about \$68,000 of inkind services. To make such a program work requires a dedicated and energetic individual to manage it.

Events programming can also be conducted within one space and managed by an individual corporation. The First National Bank Plaza in Chicago is a good example, although many corporations around the country are doing the same. The Bank employs a plaza coordinator for eight months, and an assistant during the summer. Events are scheduled for every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 11:45 AM and 2:00 PM. They also have evening events dispersed through the summer months. Since the program began over five years ago it has become strong enough to account for the purchase of a sound system and stage for the large sunken plaza. The success of the program can be seen on any day when there is an event. The plaza and sidewalks around it are filled with people, while when there is no event, the plaza can appear quite barren.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

- o Where are activities needed? Are there spaces that are underutilized that could be enhanced? Are there well-used, centrally-located spaces where events could make them more pleasant?
- o What kinds of events are needed? Can a range of events be provided, from major festivals to street entertainers?
- o When are events needed--lunchtime, all day, after work, Saturdays?
- o Who is to be attracted by events--office workers, shoppers, people who don't ordinarily come downtown?
- o Who can help organize events? What existing resources are available in terms of arts groups, etc.?

Vending

OVERVIEW

Several cities around the country have developed innovative programs which encourage street vending as part of an overall plan to bring and keep people downtown. With the establishment of specific regulations as to the location of vendors, the types of goods sold, and the design of vending carts, cities such as Portland and New Orleans have found that vending can contribute enormously to the vitality and prosperity of downtown. Vendors can serve not only to enhance the image of downtown and attract shoppers, but also to perform management tasks, improve the downtown's retail mix, provide a security presence on the street, and even generate revenues for other downtown management activities.

Historically, street vending has been viewed as a detriment to commercial areas, and many cities have made active attempts to restrict or ban all vending (or peddling as it is often called) from downtown. The sidewalk vendor is seen as unfair competition to the tax-paying, store retailer. Merchants complain about the unsavory appearance of vendors, and the verbal solicitations which draw customers away from stores. City officials are concerned about the sale of illicit goods, the sidewalk congestion which vending can cause, and liability issues.

Experience in several cities indicates that vending can actually provide a whole range of benefits for merchants, for shoppers, and for the city itself--if it is controlled. Instead of trying to eliminate vending, cities can develop regulations which help to insure that vending works to their advantage.

The downtown organization which wants to create a stronger feeling of a marketplace in the downtown's public spaces must consider the potential opportunities presented by street vending. It also must have a full understanding of the problems created by street vending and why city governments and merchants have been so resistant to their presence on downtown streets. While few organizations currently control street vending in their downtowns, there are two ways in which they can help make improvements: they can "sell" the concept of controlled street vending which will contribute rather than detract from the shopping environment; and they can issue permits, inspect vendors for compliance with the law, and actively seek entrepreneurs who will produce innovative pushcart designs and sell diverse products.

One of the primary benefits of vending is that it can be an attraction which actually draws shoppers and tourists as well as downtown employees into the downtown shopping area. With very inexpensive design improvements, vending carts can become a very colorful addition to the downtown marketplace. The personality of the vendor, the uniqueness of the cart and wares, and the activity generated can all help to create a distinctive character and lively ambiance in downtown just as Faneuil Hall in Boston has done.

Apart from aesthetic and visual reasons, street vendors attract people onto downtown shopping streets because they provide a service which is not necessarily offered in stores. A downtown employee on a short lunch hour can pick up a quick lunch and then still have time to do shopping errands. Others find fresh produce and flowers to take home in the evening, or a low-priced gift for a fellow employee. A survey of people in downtown Portland showed very favorable attitudes towards street vendors. The fact that vendors persist in downtowns throughout the country in spite of anti-vending regulations is a strong indication of consumer demand for their products.

Street vendors can also provide services in terms of management tasks they perform on downtown streets. They maintain the area around their carts, picking up litter, sweeping or reporting street furniture damage. They give directions and other helpful information to shoppers or tourists. Most importantly, they are a security presence on the street, and can, for example, ask "undesirables" to leave their vending areas. New Orleans merchants describe how vendors discourage crime by being "eyes on the street." In New York City, there have been numerous instances where vendors have apprehended pickpockets or purse-snatchers and held them until the police arrived.

Vendors can sometimes even be used to generate activity in areas which are not well used and have become security problems (or even centers for undesirable and/or illicit activities). For example, in a park or plaza which is very close to a major pedestrian route, placing a vendor at the rear of the park may be enough to draw activity there and displace "undesirables" (or at least make them less noticeable among the "desirables"). This tactic worked in Filene's Park in downtown Boston. In other cases, a vacant lot or park which is slightly off the main route might be safer if a whole market of vendors or farmers market stalls are used to generate activity.

While downtown merchants complain that vendors draw customers away from their stores, experience indicates that if the city or

merchants regulate the type of goods sold at various locations, the vendors can actually have a positive effect on downtown businesses. Flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables, newspapers and food are items which are generally not sold in downtown shops. Downtown employees will come into the shopping area to pick up such items on a daily basis, and may then be attracted to purchase other goods in the stores.

Having vendors on downtown streets also has the effect of slowing down pedestrians and making them take a closer look at displays, both of the vendors wares and the merchants windows. Project for Public Spaces has documented this phenomenon, know as the "spill effect," on film. It is especially effective when the store display windows are set back under an arcade. At Woolworth's in Downtown Boston, a fruit and vegetable vendor under the arcade slowed people down, and drew them closer to the store display windows and store entrance.

Vending also offers retail development opportunities to the downtown business community. Vendors who sell small gift items or new "fad" products serve as a test market for adjacent stores. In downtown Newark, store buyers talk to vendors to find out what's selling well and where they purchased their stock. Merchants themselves can even establish vending stalls. A flower shop in Boston has found this very profitable, as have restaurants in downtown Portland. For the small entrepreneur, the opportunity to operate a vending cart is often the first step towards opening a small business with low rent and overhead costs.

A final important potential benefit of vending is the revenues that can be generated if the city chooses to lease (or auction off) specified vending locations on downtown streets. Vending can be lucrative, and given the right spot, vendors are often willing to pay some form of rent. This is being done now in many cities in the form of a high license fee. Several cities are considering the lease or franchise program, including Boston and New York. Revenues can even be earmarked for maintenance and other management programs in the downtown area.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

Successful vending programs developed in cities such as Portland, Chicago, New Orleans, and San Francisco have begun with the complete revision of outdated vending ordinances. New regulations specify the location of carts, type of goods sold, size and design of carts, and permit fee or license processes. Involving downtown businessmen, both merchants and employers, in the planning of a new ordinance is critical. A vending program cannot be effective without their cooperation.

The specifics of the ordinance should be developed based on a thorough inventory of the downtown marketplace, reviewing aspects such as the layout and design of public areas and ground floor frontage; the amount of pedestrian and shopping activity; the profile of existing and potential customers; and the types of businesses and other activities in downtown. While a well-drafted ordinance will help to create a successful downtown marketplace, it is no guarantee of success. An effective vending program also depends on people who enforce the regulations and make vending an integral part of an overall management program for downtown.

What follows is a description of the different types of regulations which cities have used to develop successful vending programs. Many of the ideas are drawn from the programs in Portland, Chicago, New Orleans, Grand Junction (Colorado), San Francisco, and Berkeley.

Specified Vending Locations

Developing regulations which specify permitted locations for vending is a critical aspect of controlled vending. Several of the most successful programs actually limit vending to specific blocks of downtown, and assign individual fixed locations. The locations chosen must be good for the vendor, good for the pedestrian or shopper, and good for the adjacent merchant (or other ground floor use). Relevant factors to consider include sidewalk width, pedestrian flow, distance between vendor locations, building entrances, sidewalk fixtures, bus stops, crosswalks, and display windows.

In general, to benefit the vendor and the pedestrian, the locations should be adjacent to the most heavily-trafficked pedestrian routes, such as near an intersection, a bus stop, or heavily-used seating area or plaza. With a careful consideration of sidewalk widths, the size of vending carts, and pedestrian walking patterns, the city can identify locations which will not impede pedestrian or vehicular circulation. In San Francisco, the city found that by specifying appropriate vendor locations, they were actually able to reduce congestion.

Merchants must be consulted to determine which locations and which types of goods will be compatible with (or even beneficial to) their store operation. The type of good sold is usually the critical issue. Food vendors are often appropriate in front of department stores or small shops since food is not competitive with the store's merchandise and may actually be an attraction or amenity for the store's clientele. Flowers and produce stands are generally appropriate near transit connections or parking lots since

people tend to pick up such goods coming to or from work.

The design of a store may also influence decisions as to appropriate vendor locations. Vendors can be strategically placed to draw people towards entrances, or to enliven blank facade walls. All the vending ordinances surveyed made some provision for review by adjacent building occupants of both the vendor locations and the types of goods sold. In Portland, vendors worked in close cooperation with the storeowner to develop their cart and vending operations.

The allocation of vending locations has not proved to be as problematic as many people expected. The vendors themselves understand the problem of too many vendors in one space, and in some cases welcome the formalization of what are usually ad hoc locational agreements. Locations can be assigned by lottery, by auction, or by vendor request on a first-come, first-served basis (as in Portland and Grand Junction). Berkeley, California, set up a two-tier system, with Class A licenses for \$100 on the main street and Class B licenses for \$70 on the side streets. In most cities, there are plenty of locations in downtown which are good for vendors and for merchants, and which do not impede circulation. Berkeley marked off 200 individual locations within a four-block area. More often the issue is how to allocate the best locations.

In some downtowns, it is appropriate to differentiate between the types of permits, or the types of regulations which apply in different locations. For example, in Grand Junction, Colorado, there are different types of permits (with different fees) for an outdoor cafe, a kiosk, a mobile vendor, and a pedestrian vendor (e.g., a balloon salesman). Permits required to participate once a week in a farmers' market on a vacant lot may be different from the permit required to operate daily on Main Street.

In most cities that do provide permits for vending, it is the responsibility of a city agency or department. However, in some cases where private or quasi-public organizations manage a pedestrian mall, the permits are controlled by the organization. For instance, in Memphis, Tennessee, the Center City Commission regulates vending on the Mid-American Mall by issuing two-week permits for vendors, street musicians and craftsmen who sell their wares on the mall. The permit application process requires a personal appearance, and the permit can be revoked at any time.

Types of Goods Sold

There are many reasons to specify the types of goods which vendors are permitted to sell in downtown. One main reason is to minimize any competition between vendors and adjacent merchants. It is also important to encourage the sale of goods which shoppers or downtown employees do not find in other shopping areas, such as fresh produce or artist handicrafts. This gives downtown a unique attraction which draws a regular or expanded clientele, and allows it to be more competitive with suburban shopping centers. Specifying the type of goods also offers the opportunity to preclude the sale of "junk items" or items generally viewed as "stolen goods."

The type of goods which cities have found to be the most acceptable to merchants, vendors, and shoppers are flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables, newspapers, sundries, and foodstuffs. These are items which are less likely to be sold in downtown shops and for which there is a strong steady demand from employees and shoppers. Portland even limits permissible items to flowers and foodstuffs. On the Chicago State Street Mall, vendors can sell most food items except sandwiches, since local restaurateurs feel that would infringe on their business.

Other goods can also prove to be very successful in terms of sales and in terms of attracting people to the downtown marketplace, depending upon the particular characteristics of the area and the vendors. In San Francisco and Berkeley, specialty marketplaces have been created through regulations which allow only hand-crafted artistic items to be sold. These shopping streets draw customers, including tourists, from a very wide area. This same principle can be applied in a particular area of downtown, for example, by allowing artists to set up in an underutilized park or plaza. The obvious danger of over-regulation is that it can discourage the wide variety of goods which can add a unique color, character, or image in downtown.

Cities indicated that regulating the type of good sold was a very important component of their vending program, primarily because merchants' concerns about competition were alleviated. Toronto officials feel they have rid themselves of "junk dealers," and that the quality of goods sold has improved. It should be noted however that specifying the type of good may require the city or merchants to do some "marketing" to attract particular vendors into downtown. Toronto's strict regulations have resulted in a relative paucity of vendors, and they believe they need to seek out more vendors for the area.

Size and Design of Vending Carts

Regulations covering the size and design of carts have also been included in vending ordinances in order to minimize the potential for sidewalk congestion, and to encourage colorful, attractive design. Regulations as to the size of the cart cover total square feet, length, width, and height (in Portland the limits are 16 sq. feet, six feet in length, three feet in width, and five feet in height.)

Portland, Oregon, has taken the most initiative in regulating cart design by setting up a design review process which encourages originality, diversity, and harmony with the urban environment. With simple materials, vendors have developed very colorful carts with painted graphics, umbrellas and other features. One way of encouraging such innovative design would be to allow local design school students to provide free assistance in developing inexpensive cart design schemes. Experience with permanent vending kiosks in Chicago pointed out the importance of giving vendors the opportunity to have a chair and/or protective covering which allows them to be comfortable throughout the day, even in bad weather.

Design issues also arise when the Health Department reviews food vendor carts. While health standards are necessary to prevent any danger of food spoilage, in some instances health agencies establish standards which are so strict that food peddling is almost prohibitive. Food vending is one of the most lucrative, attractive, and beneficial types of vending in downtowns. Interesting foodstuffs such as ethnic foods and gourmet snacks (burritos, Japanese dishes, Chinese food, pastry goods, soups) can enhance the downtown marketplace. Health standards should be reviewed to determine if they are appropriately applied to downtown vendors. In Portland and other cities, the issue has been resolved by requiring all vendors of perishable foods to be franchised from a local restaurant or food producer.

Other Vending Regulations

There are a few other types of regulations which some cities have included in their vending ordinances. In order to encourage maintenance and clean up, many cities require food vendors to have waste disposal bags attached to their carts, and to make special arrangements for trash removal at the end of the day. Grand Junction, Colorado, even requires that vendors clean up the area within a 25-foot radius of their cart.

Many city ordinances prohibit verbal solicitation in order to prevent the hawking which many merchants find offensive. A few

cities have specified the hours of operation for vendors. While most cities tend to limit vending to daytime hours, opportunities for expanding the "safe period" in downtown could be created by encouraging vendors to be downtown at specified off-peak times, for example one evening during the week when the stores stay open.

Permit Fees and License Provisions

All controlled vending ordinances establish a license or permit application process at which time the issues of location, merchandise sold, and cart design are resolved. Often an official badge or license is issued for the vendor to display. Vendors are assessed a fee for the permit. This ranges from \$20 per year for artists in San Francisco to \$500 for a year-round vendor on Chicago's State Street Mall.

The trend in many cities is to charge higher fees (\$200 to \$500) for vending permits. Cities justify fees in terms of administrative costs incurred by the city, enforcement costs, and the maintenance cost of public spaces used by vendors. Some have suggested that high fees are also a payment to the city in lieu of the sales tax revenues which are generally not collected from vendors. San Francisco has instituted an arrangement whereby artists post a small bond (\$100) to cover anticipated sales tax collections.

Some cities have begun to consider leasing or auctioning off specified vendor locations. In heavily-trafficked areas, vending can be lucrative enough to cover this "rental payment." A New York vendor can earn between \$200 and \$500 per day. In Portland, vendors earn from \$100 to \$200 per day. Vendors in Faneuil Hall in Boston pay \$400 per month for their 100 square foot area.

Cities also generally require that vendors either carry liability insurance or post a bond to cover city liability.

Enforcement of Vending Ordinances

Enforcement of controlled vending is critical to the success of the program, particularly at its outset. Most cities have relied on police to enforce vending ordinances. In many cases though, police are busy with other tasks and do not view vending enforcement as a priority. Furthermore, they often do not understand the intent of a controlled vending program, and tend to treat infractions as criminal offenses instead of trying to find a creative solution to any problems that arise. It is often preferable to have other enforcement agents. Some downtowns may have "mall

managers" or other type of regular foot patrol personnel. In Chicago, a city official takes daily "attendance" of vendors, and if a vendor is absent for more than two weeks, he loses his permit. In other cities, merchants can help to enforce the ordinance, as can the vendors association.

Whoever is in charge of enforcement, it is imperative that rules and regulations are clear to all those involved, and enforced consistently and fairly. Cities have developed a variety of types of penalties for violation of the ordinances. These include fines, revocation of vending permit, and confiscation of goods.

In most cities, the downtown organization which recognized the potential for improving public spaces with vendors faces an uphill battle with the city bureaucracy, merchants, and possibly with its own members. It is a profession as old as cities, but with a reputation as bad as what is known as "the oldest profession." A downtown organization can build its case for controlled vending on the success of the above-mentioned cities. However, to actually change city ordinances and regulations may require the organization to set up a demonstration project or trial period to show the positive aspects of street vending.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING A VENDING PROGRAM

In order to develop a vending program which is uniquely appropriate to the physical, social, and economic context of downtown, the following types of questions should be addressed:

- o What is the nature of vending which presently occurs in downtown? Where does it occur? What types of goods are sold? Who are the vendors? Which types of shoppers buy which types of goods? How many vendors are there, and how much money do they make? What types of carts or stands are used?
- o How do shoppers, employees, merchants, other downtown users, and the police feel about vending? Which aspects do they like--the availability of goods, the security presence on the street? Which aspects do they feel negatively about--appearance, verbal solicitation, competition to stores?
- o How might vending be used to enhance downtown? Is there a need to attract more shoppers or employees onto downtown streets? Would colorful cart designs enhance downtown's image? What types of goods are not easily and quickly

available in downtown? What types of goods might vendors sell that are not found in other shopping areas? Could vendors contribute to security in downtown?

- o What is the physical layout and design of downtown streets, plazas, and ground level facades? How does that affect pedestrian and shopping activity? Consider such factors as sidewalk width, pedestrian flows, presence or absence of display windows and their setback from the sidewalk, location of building entrances, location of transit connections, placement of sidewalk furniture, etc.
- o What types of vending regulations might be appropriate? What are the present legal regulations with respect to vending? What resources are available to develop a new program, and to enforce it? Could vending generate revenues, or other non-cash benefits (maintenance, security) for downtown? How would vending fit into an overall management plan for downtown?

Farmers' Markets

OVERVIEW

A lively addition to the downtown area, farmers' markets satisfy the desire for fresh produce, bridge the gap between urban and rural communities and are potentially self-sustaining events. Markets have therefore been established across the country for a variety of reasons by even a greater variety of individuals and organizations. In most of the examples presented in this chapter, however, it has been a private or non-profit organization which has taken the initiative to establish a farmers' market. This chapter deals only with outdoor markets -- not ones in permanent buildings -- in Baltimore, Maryland; New York City; Hartford, Connecticut; Memphis, Tennessee; Waterloo, Iowa; and San Francisco, California.

Traditionally, farmers' markets were established for farmers to sell fresh produce to city residents. However, in recent years, agricultural marketing systems have stepped over this direct link, leaving cities with higher retail prices and often less than fresh produce. Today especially, many people -- from gourmet cooks in San Francisco, to ethnic communities in Jamaica, New York, to lower-income families in Hartford, Connecticut -- have a desire for fresh produce. Farmers, on the other hand, can get higher prices if they sell goods directly to consumers, avoiding the "middleman." For example, Barry Benepe, a New York City architect interested in supporting local farmers, has created 16 Farmers' Markets in New York City, with the assistance of the Council on the Environment. Farmers in Montgomery, Alabama, have also organized a market in order to sell their products. If providing fresh produce and supporting local farmers are the major aims of the market, it has been learned through experience that foods sold at the market must only be sold by the person that produced them. Farmers should also be certified by a government agriculture agency and have their farm periodically monitored by the agency or the market management.

Across the country, farmers' markets have also proven to be a successful component of a downtown revitalization effort. Downtown markets are convenient to employees and residents and their informal social atmosphere even attracts some tourists. In Jamaica, New York, the farmers' market introduced shoppers from the region to an area they had previously avoided. In

Baltimore, the market introduced enough clientele to its area such that one of the nearby empty warehouses is being converted to retail stores. In Hartford, a survey of market patrons showed that one-third had made a special trip downtown specifically to go to the market. In San Francisco, nearby merchants were so pleased that the plaza would become an active space that they donated umbrellas and printing services to help the new market. Efforts such as this help to ensure that a market is visually attractive and relates to the needs of downtown merchants.

The future of the farmers' markets seems bright. Their success in revitalization of the downtown also carries over to the growth of the markets themselves. Many markets are expanding their advertising, event programs and the variety of merchandise (plants, baked goods, etc.) to attract an even larger clientele. Markets serving lower income people, in particular, have found that follow-up nutrition demonstrations and health fairs provide an important public service.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

Farmers' Market Design and Layout

Markets are located in pedestrian malls, streets, parking lots, plazas, parks, and on sidewalks. In the vast majority of situations, these sites were chosen specifically because they were in high traffic areas, accessible to the customer, or because of a specific effort to revitalize an area. Interestingly, site ownership was not overtly a major consideration. Land, whether privately, publically or institutionally owned, was usually given or rented for a nominal fee.

Two other elements for success were; first, a "healthy" amount of congestion and, second, food concessions. "Healthy" congestion is necessary for the perception of color, vitality and interest. Jamaica purposely designed their market as close to the sidewalk as possible with aisles that allowed for tight circulation. Food concessions are also a key "people draw". Baltimore attributes their rapid success to their "Country Breakfast". In Jamaica, the market includes prepared ethnic foods.

Markets range greatly in terms of physical sophistication, from trucks backed up to sidewalks to ones with specially designed stalls. Selling from trucks and vans allows for expediency in set-up and take-down in sites that serve only temporarily as markets. In Hartford, a street at the main downtown intersection

is closed between 10AM and 3PM so that trucks can park perpendicular to the curb, and goods can be displayed in the lane closest to the sidewalk. Since heavy vehicles, however, proved detrimental to the surface of one pedestrian mall, the sellers were required to bring tables and chairs. In these situations, more enterprising salesmen rigged up protective awnings and displayed the produce in baskets (this approach is much less convenient, however). Both Jamaica, New York's, and San Francisco's downtown markets carefully designed their stalls (which were then rented from the management by the sellers) to be attractive, functional and durable. San Francisco enlisted the aid of the University of California's School of Commercial Design in designing the stalls. In Jamaica, a linear, light-weight steel structure is left up permanently and canvas covers attached on market day. Trucks can park perpendicular to the structure and unload their produce directly under the canopy.

The obvious drawback of outdoor markets is inclement weather. However, due to the nature of selling local produce, the markets are operated generally once or twice a week during the summer and autumn months and precipitation was only an occasional difficulty. In fact, customers still came despite the weather.

Market Management

Times and seasons. Farmers' Markets are usually dependent upon local produce and therefore operate from late spring until late autumn. The markets often open quite early, as early as 5 AM, but generally around 8 AM. Some are half-day markets, but most are open for approximately 10 hours for 1, 2, or 3 days a week. Markets can be found open any day of the week although Saturdays are a preferred day. Weekday markets often cater to business people and Sunday markets often have the purpose of providing entertainment and drawing people downtown on the weekend.

Numbers. The cities interviewed ranged in size from 50,000 to over 250,000. The largest outdoor markets, in Baltimore, serves up to 10,000 people per day and has over a hundred farmers. New York City neighborhood markets with 16 to 25 sellers serve up to 4,000 customers. Smaller markets with an estimated 200 to 500 customers daily have between 10 to 20 sellers. It is a particular concern to smaller markets that a variety of goods be available. Competition among sellers at farmers' markets when it occurs is generally a healthy aspect. Farmers police each other and although some friction may occur, some problems may be alleviated by, for example, not having three tomato sellers in a row.

Organization. In general, farmers' markets are run by one of three groups: city governments (through their Public Works, Tourism Promotion Departments or through a contracted management organization); downtown private sector organizations; and public interest groups such as the Council on the Environment of New York City.

Whoever the sponsor, markets require on-site managers. The manager's duties include public relations, acting as liaison between the sponsor and the sellers, and supervising setting up and cleaning up. In Memphis, the market manager is a representative chosen by the Farmers' Association; in other cases, the manager was hired by the city. Downtown private sector organizations have come up with a variety of sources for market managers. Some use their own staff, one utilizes a state agricultural agency employee with a marketing background, and another has a volunteer committee of sellers who aid the operation of the market. San Francisco has, through an arrangement with the city, leased the market site for a nominal fee for a nominal fee to a Quaker group who assumes responsibility for and manages the market. Several markets hire part-time laborers to aid in clean up and, in one case, to get change and to allow the sellers to take breaks.

Financing. The sponsoring organizations generally finance the initial costs of setting up the farmers' market. These funds are obtained from their own operating budget or from special grants. San Francisco's market benefitted from a \$10,000 State of California grant (via the Food and Agriculture Department). The amount of seed money necessary depends upon the extent of the initial effort, i.e., whether a temporary structure is provided, for instance. Ongoing financing, if only to cover the market manager's time, is often necessary. For example, the fees collected from farmers amount to only 35% of New York City's Greenmarket's operating expenses.

Fees charged to farmers range greatly and are charged on a daily or seasonal basis. Fees (including health permits) on an annual basis range from approximately \$50.00 to almost \$200.00, daily rates between \$25.00 and \$60.00. Memphis charges nothing; Waterloo, Iowa, requires only a yearly permit costing \$500.00.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN ORGANIZING A FARMERS' MARKET

- o Is there a need for a farmers' market? How available is fresh produce? Are there local farmers who would be willing to sell at a market? Who would be served by the market--downtown employees, lower income residents, shoppers?
- o Where can the market take place? Are there spaces of sufficient size to accommodate truck parking, display area, and pedestrian circulation space? Can truck parking take place directly adjacent to display areas? Should the market take place in a heavily used area of downtown, or in an area that is being revitalized?
- o What kinds of goods would be sold at the market? During what months are local produce in season? Should non-farmers be permitted to sell baked goods, plants, or prepared foods to extend the markets' season?
- o How should the market be funded and managed? Are there local organizations (food coops, agricultural extension services, public advocacy groups) that can assist in organizing the market? What is a reasonable fee that can be charged to farmers? Who can manage the market on a day-to-day basis?
- o How should the market be designed? Can simple, colorful canopies be used to make the market more visually attractive and provide weather protection? Can farmers be clustered or extended linearly in such a way as to maintain a healthy level of "congestion" and vitality?

IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACE

Design and management improvements to downtown go hand-in-hand. As has been described, management programs have often been developed specifically in response to major design improvements, such as a pedestrian mall. The opposite approach is also possible. A downtown organization, under a comprehensive public space management program, can take primary responsibility for encouraging improvements to the design of public spaces. This task can take many forms, and this chapter deals with two:

- o design review of major downtown development
- o design improvements to streets, sidewalks, parks, and plazas

This chapter does not describe how to design these buildings or spaces but, rather, concentrates on the management strategies behind the design changes.

Design Review

OVERVIEW

One of the major tasks of most downtown organizations is economic development and, in particular, to help to encourage new office buildings, housing projects, shopping centers, parking garages, hotels, and cultural facilities. These kinds of developments, which bring new people and activity downtown, are often the cornerstone of revitalization efforts.

Design review is a process by which the design of a new development or an existing building undergoing substantial rehabilitation is "reviewed" in order to protect the economic value of properties surrounding it: to make sure that the new building complies with the design and land-use criteria that affect the character, use, and overall development of a downtown. There are many different ways a project can be "reviewed," from informal meetings with the developer to mandatory hearings before a planning commission. This chapter deals primarily with the role a private sector downtown organization can play in the overall design review process, and describes the many opportunities that exist for developing innovative programs in this area.

The effect that new developments can have on a downtown can be described in many ways, from broad economic impact to impact on underground utilities. From a design point of view, Project for Public Spaces has found that most of the impact of new developments can be described in terms of their impact on the use and enjoyment of public spaces: sidewalks, streets, parks, and plazas.

Although it is obvious that major new buildings alter the skyline of a city for generations, it may not be as obvious that these buildings have had a similar impact at street level. It is at street level that the building must come to terms with the city that surrounds it. Unfortunately, most new developments do not realize the full potential of their public spaces.

The most obvious impact that new developments have on public spaces is that they create new public spaces, both interior and exterior. In fact, very few major developments are built today that do not have some sort of public amenity, such as a plaza or atrium. How these spaces work is critical to revitalization efforts in a downtown. All too frequently, spaces are lifeless and devoid of people. Plazas, for example, may be nothing but wind-swept expanses of concrete, attractive only to loiterers, drug

dealers, and other "undesirables." William H. Whyte's book, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, and accompanying film are excellent references for what makes useful and usable public spaces.

In addition to creating new public spaces, major new developments alter the day-to-day functioning of existing public spaces in a downtown. For example, a development with a 1000-car parking garage may cause severe congestion at rush hour. The impact developments may have on pedestrian activities may not so commonly be realized, however. A development which puts blank walls or parking garages at street level rather than shops which open onto the street may severely weaken, rather than enhance, adjacent retail shops. PPS's research, for example, shows that people walk faster past such locations: sidewalks become thoroughfares, rather than places to stroll, socialize, and window shop.

The basic intent of design review should, therefore, go beyond mere esthetics of the building to how the development can be integrated into the fabric of the city. Design review should seek to avoid problems before the building is constructed, and to help developers understand the potential of a site and how that site relates to the rest of downtown.

In describing design review, it is important to differentiate the role of the private sector from the role only the city government can play--realizing that there are many ways that the design of a new development can be influenced. There are two ways that the city can legally enforce design criteria. The first is, of course, through zoning. Most zoning ordinances, however, do not deal at the level of architectural detail important to the real functional impact of a building on a downtown. Only a few cities, for example, such as Portland, Oregon, and Miami, have ordinances which prohibit blank walls or mandate retail (not banks and offices) at street level in certain locations.

Other cities have developed incentive zoning ordinances, in combination with some formal design review procedure. Under incentive zoning, developers may build buildings that are larger than those they would be permitted under "normal" or "as of right" zoning regulations--if they provide amenities and if their plans are approved by a planning commission or other official body. It was under this ordinance that most of New York City's recent plazas have been built. Other cities, such as Anchorage, Alaska, give developers "bonuses" if they provide such items as trees, seating, public restrooms, shops facing the streets, theatres, and hotels. Obviously, incentive zoning is an excellent way to make improvement to downtown public spaces at little or no cost to the city, and some cities even provide bonuses for improvements that are located away from the new development.

In addition to zoning, many cities, particularly those with historic districts, have instituted mandatory design review commissions. These commissions typically review all new construction and renovation that occur within a defined area and have the ability to deny a building permit if the building does not meet certain criteria or standards. Some of the many cities which have such design review commissions are: Portland, Oregon; Greenwich, Connecticut; Trenton, New Jersey; Vail, Colorado; Lake Forest, Illinois; and New Orleans. Each of these cities have developed a design review system which uniquely addresses the different politics, personalities, and history of zoning controls in the city.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

It is quite clear that private sector downtown organizations cannot, by themselves, administer a zoning ordinance or an official, legally-binding design review process for downtown buildings. However, there are a number of ways that private sector downtown organizations can become involved in design review. Particularly as downtowns enter a new period of growth, downtown organizations should realize that they are no longer in a "beggar's position" where they must accept any kind of development. The private sector can help to shape the form and future of a downtown.

The survey of IDEA members showed that design review was a relatively "low" priority for their organizations: only about one-third felt it was a "medium" or "high" priority at present, and about one-half felt that design, ideally, rated a "medium" or "high" priority. Most (65%) organizations allocate no funds from their budget specifically for design review. Despite this low level of overall involvement, many organizations have instituted programs that serve as examples for what other organizations can do.

Urban Design Studies

Many downtown organizations have commissioned urban design or planning studies of the downtown as a basis for understanding what kinds of development are desirable or needed. These studies may be paid for entirely by the downtown organization from private funds or grants, or funded cooperatively with the city. In some cases, a downtown organization can administer funds of others while not funding a study directly itself.

Whatever the funding source, the basic purpose of these studies is to provide information that can be incorporated into zoning ordinances, official design review processes, or city master plans. The Denver Partnership, for example, studied zoning along the new

Sixteenth Street Mall, inviting the participation of property owners, developers, merchants, and historic preservation advocates. Concerned that new development might reduce retail which opens onto the street and result in the demolition of historic buildings, the Denver Partnership developed an incentive zoning system which was approved unanimously by the City Council. Under the zoning ordinance, for example, a developer can receive six square feet of additional office space for each one square foot of pedestrian-oriented retail, and eight square feet if this retail is "active," i.e. not banks, airline offices, etc.

Of course, the danger in conducting such a study is that the city can elect to reject or ignore the recommendations, and this is a problem that should be anticipated from the very beginning. In Cincinnati, a committee of 18 persons, representing the city administration, planning commission, downtown organization, and civic interests conducted, with professional consultants, a master plan for the downtown revitalization. The recommendations of the committee, developed through a careful public review procedure, were approved without problem by the City Planning Commission and City Council because both groups had been represented on the committee.

Participation in Official Design Review Bodies

If a city has an official design review body, a representative from downtown organization may be a member of the board. Whether or not this is possible depends upon the structure of the board. Most boards seem to be dominated by people in the design professions: architects, landscape architects, planners. Other boards, such as the one in Portland, Oregon, are more broadly based, with representatives from the City Planning Commission, Metropolitan Arts Commission, a citizen-at-large, and four members with technical experience in design, development, finance, building management, or engineering. A professional panel of architects, landscape architects, and/or urban designers are employed in an advisory capacity when needed, usually for large projects. This latter model would allow greater participation for a downtown organization.

Voluntary Design Review

If a city has no official design review body, a voluntary program may be organized--and this is where a downtown organization can be especially active. In Hartford, the Hartford Architecture Conservancy, the Downtown Council, and other city agencies and private groups formed a design committee in 1979 to fill the void caused by a lack of urban design criteria and a design review process for major downtown developments. Downtown Hartford

at that time was about to embark on a major building boom with millions of square feet of new office buildings and retail. Members of the committee developed specific criteria in terms of the building context (height, massing, impact on traffic, preservation of landmark buildings) as well as the proposed project's impact on pedestrian uses, street level retail, and easily-accessible public spaces. In general, the committee found the city and developers all cooperated with the review procedures, and were invited to meet with the committee early in their planning efforts. The review procedure results in a letter to the developer outlining the positive and negative parts of the project, related to the specific design criteria. Of course, what the committee decides is not legally binding in any way, which is why they favor an official city review body. It appears, however, that the presence of the board has encouraged developers to change aspects of their plans.

From a developer's point of view, it is important that any design review procedure--formal or informal--be clear as to criteria for evaluation so that precious time is not wasted. In San Francisco, developers are given a three to five page memorandum during the early stages of a project which outlines the planning department's major urban design concerns. Although prepared by the city, this memo is something that a private sector downtown organization could also prepare, serving as the coordinator between the city and private groups. This document could even be accepted by an official design review board as a basis for their evaluation.

This approach--where a downtown organization actively seeks to work with developers from very early in the planning process--is one that has many advantages. From the developer's point of view, it can save time (and therefore money) in terms of approval processes and in just learning about the needs of downtown. From the downtown's point of view, it provides an opportunity to explain, from experience as well as planning studies, specific design features of a development that would help to integrate it into downtown. Basic functional aspects of a project--pedestrian access, street-level retail, vehicle access--are all things which a developer must know and which affect downtown-at-large. Again, if there is no official design review procedure, the success of this process will ultimately depend upon the persuasive ability of the downtown organization, the receptivity of the developer and the architect, and the amount of political pressure that can be brought to bear on the situation.

An example of this approach is the work of the Greater Jamaica (Queens) Development Corporation in New York City. They have developed non-binding criteria for an "office development district" located on a redevelopment parcel in their downtown. Project for Public Spaces surveyed the employees of the first tenant of this

district in order to better understand the need for outdoor public spaces and retail facilities. This information, and other materials provided by the development corporation, has proved useful in giving both this tenant and developer on an adjacent site a better idea of what the potential is for their buildings. The strengths the development corporation brings to this project, therefore, are familiarity with the community, specific planning studies with direct application to the project, and political connections which could work to the advantage or disadvantage of the developer or builder.

Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from these examples is that it is important to see design review from the developer's standpoint. If it will speed the building process along and create a better building and harmonious working relationship in the city, then design review will be seen as an advantage. Personality and politics are important in such a voluntary process. If design review is conducted poorly--too late in the design or with obstruction rather than cooperation in mind--then it will not be effective, unless, of course, there are official design review or zoning ordinances on which to fall back. Finally, it should be realized that the quality of design, is greatly determined by the quality of the architect and his or her sensitivity to the problems a downtown organization wishes to address. This problem is a difficult one to solve, but shows how important a good working relationship is between the people designing and financing the building and those who must live with it over time.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING A DESIGN REVIEW PROGRAM

In taking a more active role in design review, a downtown organization must basically be certain that it is prepared to answer questions that a developer will ask. Once a downtown organization understands where development is likely to occur and what kind it is likely to be, these questions are among those to be addressed in regard to functionally integrating the development into the downtown.

Public Spaces

- o What kinds of public spaces are really needed: a small sitting space or a major plaza? Are there sufficient public spaces already near the building? How are these used--heavily or lightly?
- o Where should a public space be located in relation to surrounding building entrances, the street, retail frontage, sun and

wind patterns, so they are actively used?

- o What kinds of facilities and amenities are needed in the spaces, such as seating, fountains, trees, etc.? Should this be a passive space (a place just to go and sit) or an active one with cafes, vending, and events and performances?
- o Who should manage this space?

Retail

- o What mix of retail is needed in downtown and in this area specifically?
- o Where should retail be located? How should it relate to surrounding retail (i.e., interior facing or streetfront)?

Physical Context

- o How should the height and massing of the building relate to surrounding buildings? What impact on sun and shade is acceptable?
- o Are there natural features or historic building on the site that should be preserved or enhanced?

Traffic and Pedestrian Patterns

- o What is the capacity of the existing streets and sidewalks in terms of traffic and pedestrian flow? Will these spaces be over-loaded if major development takes place?
- o How much parking should be provided in the new development, based on existing demand and capacity of the street network? Where should vehicle entrances to the buildings be located?
- o How wide should sidewalks be to accommodate increases in pedestrian flows because of new development? Where should entrances to the buildings be located?

Public Spaces Improvements

OVERVIEW

Ever since the first U.S. pedestrian mall was constructed in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1959, there has been much emphasis--probably too much emphasis--placed on improvements to streets, sidewalks, and other downtown public spaces. For a long time it was felt that design improvements to public spaces was downtown revitalization. A major reason why pedestrian malls were built was, of course, to try to make downtown as much like a suburban shopping center as possible. Ironically, it was the management programs of shopping centers that probably should have been mimicked rather than their design. Many cities have discovered the hard way that just creating a "mall" is not enough, that brick sidewalks and flowering trees do not, in themselves, revitalize downtown.

Since 1975, Project for Public Spaces has been involved with the analysis of how people use all kinds of downtown public spaces, and making recommendations for their improvement. This chapter can only introduce the major lessons learned from these studies. For more detail, PPS's Designing Effective Pedestrian Improvements in Business Districts, recently published by the American Planning Association, should be consulted.

There are many sound and important reasons for improving public spaces in downtowns:

Comfort. Comfort can be improved with amenities for people: places to sit, protection from the sun, a pleasant place to wait for the bus. Comfort can also be improved through widening sidewalks, if they are congested.

Accessibility. Improvements can make a space more accessible for pedestrians as well as vehicles. For example, a transit mall can make it both easier for people to cross the street and can improve bus circulation.

Vitality. Improvements can also make a space more active with cafes, vending and other street-oriented activities. Performance and festivals can also add life to plazas and parks.

Image. Improvements can, finally, change the appearance of a street, creating a new image that can be marketed to attract shoppers.

While improvements to public spaces have many benefits, much can go wrong. Mistakes seem to fall in three general categories. First, the overall distribution of space between vehicles and pedestrians is often inappropriate. There are countless examples of pedestrian malls, for example, that are simply too large for the number of people using them. They have too much space and seem empty, if not dangerous, especially at off-peak hours. A second problem is with the type and location of amenities. All too frequently, amenities are placed as "objets d'art" on a street: a trash receptacle every 50 feet, a bench every 100, trees marching in rows 40 feet apart. This regimentation bears no relationship to the needs of specific locations, so that seating, for example, may go unused or may be used mainly by "undesirables." Also, the design of many amenities may create problems: seating which is uncomfortable to sit on, bus shelters which do not protect people from weather, and so on. And, finally, once the ribbon is cut on a project, management--all the aspects described in this handbook--may be inadequate or inappropriate. This prevents the public spaces from living up to their full potential.

The main role a private sector downtown organization can play in making design improvements to public spaces is in acting as the primary force for change, or, at the very least, cooperating with city agencies who might also take the lead role. Whether an improvement is an expensive transit mall or just tree plantings on Main Street, the role of a downtown organization seems to fall into three main areas:

Building Community Support. As a representative of the business community, the downtown organization can help to get support for improvements from merchants and corporations. Of course, the more day-to-day contact the downtown organization has with merchants, the easier this process will be.

Consultants. The downtown organization can help select consultants to plan and design the improvements.

Financing. And finally, the downtown organization can assist in finding financing for both designing and constructing improvements, whether it be through special tax assessments, voluntary contributors, or grants. As federal support for these kinds of improvements decreases, this role is becoming even more critical.

The programs described below should be viewed in the light of these three main roles.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

Hundreds of cities across the country, from small towns to large cities, have constructed major improvements to public spaces over the past 20 years. The process of planning these pedestrian malls, transit malls or sidewalk widenings is complex and is better documented in other publications devoted exclusively to these kinds of improvements.

What strategies has not been so well documented, however, are those which are lower in cost or smaller in scale. There are, naturally, some disadvantages to taking a small-scale approach to improvements: they tend not to dramatically transform spaces, but merely to make them more active or comfortable to use. But, even if a city is planning to build a major improvement over the long term, it is important to have immediate, "do-able" projects to make public spaces work better in the short term.

"Fine-tuning" Improvements

Some cities have decided that their improvements need to be improved. This should not be regarded as a failure of a design, only a realization that all designs must continually be adjusted as people's needs and patterns of use change. For example, the Downtown Development Authority in Grand Junction, Colorado, has been instrumental in hiring consultants to redesign the amenities on their downtown "Shopping Park." The Shopping Park, built some 20 years ago, has been successful in helping to keep downtown active but has recently begun to deteriorate physically, and does not reflect current opportunities for such activities as vending. (Grand Junction now has a well-prepared vending ordinance.) A plan now being developed seeks to provide new seating, bus stops, kiosks, trash receptacles, and plantings, as well as to improve adjacent streets. In Providence, the city has taken the lead in a similar effort. Here, Westminster Mall has been redesigned with new paving and amenities and extended onto adjacent streets, where traffic is maintained. PPS's own work on Boston's Downtown Crossing pedestrian/transit mall and on Miami's Flagler Street has resulted in recommendations to rearrange or replace recently-constructed amenities. A critical factor in making these adjustments is the flexibility of the original design. One of the major flaws of pedestrian improvements is their inflexibility. Benches are often constructed, for example, of concrete and are difficult and expensive to move.

Upgrading Privately-Owned Plazas

In cities where there are privately-owned plazas, a downtown organization can encourage the owners or managers of these spaces to upgrade them. In Hartford, the Downtown Council worked with a local bank to build a cafe on their under-utilized plaza. The cafe is operated in the summer months by a local restaurateur, and entertainment is also provided. There are many other examples of plazas which have been upgraded. In Chicago, the First National Bank has developed a comprehensive entertainment program, complemented by cafes, and food vendors. While the space was once little used, it is now filled almost to capacity on most summer noons, and is used in bank promotions.

Low-Cost Improvements to Sidewalks and Parks

There are, finally, many low-cost options to improving such publically-owned spaces as sidewalks and parks. Vending and cafes, in fact, actually generate funds. Benches and trees can also be provided by the private sector. In many cities, trees and benches are donated by private groups or individuals. Tampa's riverfront promenade was funded partially by this method, with the donor's name actually carved in the boardwalk. Other towns, such as Marshall, Michigan, have instituted a memorial tree planting program in downtown.

Sidewalk improvements can also be funded through special tax assessments. The Central Business Association of Oakland, California formed a special tax assessment district to renovate sidewalks and provide amenities on Main Street. They feel that this was a successful program to make improvements which the city refused to fund. The Downtown Development District (DDD) of New Orleans is authorized to issue bonds for capital projects. In 1979, the DDD was permitted by the City Council to commit 6.5 mils (out of a total authorized millage of 18.25 mils from its special tax assessment district) for a period of 25 years to produce \$6.5-\$7.5 million in available capital funds for downtown improvements. The District plans to leverage those funds with state and federal grants to increase the available funds for street improvement projects to \$20 million. Many of the street improvements now under construction include decorative pavers, street furniture and other pedestrian amenities.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN MAKING PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

In helping to promote design improvements to public spaces, a downtown organization should consider these questions:

- o What kinds of improvements are necessary? Are vehicle restrictions of some kind necessary to free up space for pedestrians? Or are sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian flow and space for amenities?
- o Where are improvements necessary? Where are amenities needed based on how people use a street or park?
- o What can private corporations do to improve their plazas?
- o How can improvements be financed: Tax assessment districts? Private Contributions?

**APPENDIX A: SPECIAL TAX ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS
CASE STUDIES.**

Englewood, Colorado

Downtown Development Authority

Background

Property owners and merchants organized themselves in order to compete effectively with a regional shopping mall which is located downtown. The Development Authority has worked toward the improvement of the pedestrian environment and the image of downtown Englewood.

Scope of Services

Special assessment monies have been used to purchase a building and an adjacent parking lot. Physical improvements have been made to the parking lot. A walkway connecting the parking lot with a major commercial street is in the planning stages. The Development Authority is in the process of selling the building and parking lot to a business in Englewood.

The Development Authority provided an operating subsidy to the Englewood Merchants Association, an organization which promotes businesses and encourages facade improvements. The operating subsidy gave the Merchants Association an opportunity to solicit a larger membership and to increase its operating budget. The organization is now able to support itself on membership dues.

The Development Authority has contributed one third of the cost of a preliminary study concerning redevelopment of vacant land in the development district. The proposed project includes office space, parking facilities, a hotel, and a convention center. The City of Englewood, the Downtown Development Authority, and a private developer are sharing the cost of the preliminary studies.

Special Assessment Tax

A tax of 5 mills is levied on all properties in the development district. The tax is based on the total assessed value of the land and improvements. A few residential income producing properties are located within the development district which also pay the special assessment tax to the Authority.

Englewood has created a special assessment for properties surrounding a parking lot within the downtown development district. Properties within a 400 foot radius of the center of the parking lot were evaluated in order to determine which properties did not provide the number of on-street parking spaces required by the Englewood City Code. Properties which do not have the requisite number of parking spaces pay a special assessment tax to make interest payments on a bond sold to finance the construction of this parking lot. Each parking space is calculated to have a certain monetary value. This factor is then multiplied to determine the special assessment for each property.

Issues of Concern

Downtown merchants fear rent increases which may come as a result of redevelopment downtown. The sale of two properties for \$120,000 whose assessed value was only \$48,000 has created speculation about future rent increases.

Englewood, Colorado

Issues of Concern (cont'd)

Merchants have been more enthusiastic about reevaluating the downtown image than property owners. This may be due to the merchants' acute awareness of competition from the downtown regional shopping mall in Englewood.

Affiliates

The Downtown Development Authority works closely with the Englewood Merchants Association in order to create a comprehensive approach to the solution of the problems in the development district.

Staff

The Downtown Development Association has a staff of two, including the Executive Director and a part-time secretary.

Grand Junction, Colorado

Downtown Development Authority

Background

The Downtown Development Authority was created in order to make the downtown competitive with regional shopping malls in the area.

Scope of Services

The organization is involved in improving parking facilities and may remove parking meters from commercial streets and off-street parking lots to provide facilities which are comparable to those offered at shopping malls.

The organization is working with local financial institutions to create a commercial revitalization loan pool which will provide capital for less than market rates to merchants interested in renovating their stores.

Developers and investors are assisted in locating available properties, securing financing, finding appropriate sites, and negotiating leases.

The development authority is currently estimating the cost of extending an existing pedestrian mall, improving the landscaping around off-street parking lots, and redesigning pedestrian and vehicular signage on commercial streets.

Special Assessment Tax

The Development Authority levied a special assessment tax on all properties in the district to purchase and/or extend options of some downtown properties. The monies collected have also been used for consultants, publications, and operating expenses.

A special assessment to provide the city with monies that will be lost from the removal of parking meters will probably be levied in the future. The tax may be based on the demand for parking which each property generates and distance from parking facilities.

Future Plans

The Development Authority plans to become involved in tax increment financing development projects.

Affiliates

The Grand Junction Downtown Association was recently created to parallel the activities of the Development Authority. The Association is a private, non-profit organization involved in marketing, promotion, and special event programming.

Brooklyn, New York

Fulton Mall Improvement Association

Background

Fulton Street has traditionally been a strong retail street with few vacancies. However, vacancies began to appear on side streets. Maintenance of the area was unsatisfactory prior to the creation of the Improvement Association.

Scope of Services

The organization's major concern is the management of ongoing and supplemental maintenance, street cleaning, and a 24 hour private security service. In addition, the organization is involved in public relations and promotional activities. The Association is the liaison for the merchant community in maintenance matters.

Special Assessment Tax

Special Assessment monies finance maintenance and security services on the Mall, promotional activities, and the operating budget of the Improvement Association. Taxes are calculated on the basis of the total assessed value of the land and the improvements. The special assessment is 0.542% of the total assessed value of the properties. Originally, a formula based on the assessed value of the land and 50% of the value of the improvements was proposed. The formula was rejected because smaller property owners and/or merchants argued that this arrangement favored larger building owners whose properties' improvements had high assessed values.

Boundaries of the district were determined by including each property with frontage on the Mall as well as properties near the Mall which would benefit from the improvements.

Issues of Concern

The Improvement Association has occasionally had difficulty retrieving revenues from the New York City general fund after taxes have been collected from property owners.

Future Plans

The Improvement Association plans to expand its work in community and public relations, special event promotions, and cooperative newspaper and radio advertising.

Affiliates

The Improvement Association has maintained a close relationship with the Bureau of Highway Operations during the construction of the Fulton Street Mall.

Brooklyn, New York

Staff

The staff includes the Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant.

Syracuse, New York

Downtown Committee of the Metropolitan District Authority

Background

A local ordinance creating both the downtown Special Assessment District and the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc., was adopted in order to fund several programs which were designed to improve the economic and social vitality of the downtown.

Scope of Services

The Downtown Committee is the primary vehicle for revitalizing the central business district. The Committee concentrates on the following programs: Environmental Maintenance, Security, Activity Programming and Public Information, Parking Subsidization Program and Economic Development.

A Director of Environmental Maintenance oversees a maintenance crew of 2 paid employees and 5 CETA workers who supplement the City's street cleaning efforts. The program has concentrated on encouraging compliance with city ordinances with respect to cleaning and maintaining sidewalks and other public areas around each property. The downtown committee has also worked with the City and property owners to coordinate cleaning activities in areas that are used frequently by pedestrians.

The Downtown Committee employs four to five off-duty police officers to patrol the downtown area between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The Syracuse Police Department provides the necessary vehicular and communications support for the additional security force. As part of its established beat, the security force patrols parking lots and garages. The purpose of this program is to provide increased police presence. The Downtown Committee feels that this program is effective only in increasing police presence, but not as a real deterrent to crime. Merchants have been happier since the program was established.

The Downtown Committee conducts a Public Information Program which plans and executes downtown promotions throughout the year, coordinates events with other agencies, presents a positive image of downtown, and keeps the public aware of the activities of the Committee. The Downtown Committee coordinates, promotes, and advertises several retail events each year including a Mother's Day Drawing, Farmers Market Sales, and Summer Festival Sale Days. The Committee sponsors and manages the Farmers Market each Tuesday from mid-June through mid-October. The Committee allocates space to farmers, maintains market discipline, and ensures that produce is of good quality.

The Committee runs a Saturday Parking Subsidization Program which currently provides three hours of free parking in 11 garages and lots.

The Downtown Committee assists the City in recruiting new businesses for the downtown area. It also works with the City and local real estate firms to locate tenants for vacant stores. Another important activity of the committee is providing and updating a Downtown Data Package and a Catalogue of Available Space and Available Sites to developers, real estate firms and city officials.

Special Assessment Tax

All 650 property owners in Syracuse's central business district are taxed according to a formula of assessed valuation and square footage. In 1980 this assessment covered a budget of \$419,333.

Staff

Executive Director, Deputy Director (services Management) and 46 employees on contract to the district (primarily security and maintenance). Ten percent of budget is used for hiring planning consultants.

Miami, Florida

Downtown Development Authority

Background

The City of Miami created the Downtown Development Authority in 1966 to redevelop the downtown.

Scope of Services

The Downtown Development Authority assists developers in locating potential sites for future construction. The Authority also facilitates the development process by acting as an intermediary for private developers and city regulatory agencies.

The Development Authority has been directly involved in making physical improvements. Monies raised through a special assessment tax were used to construct a section of a riverwalk and to finance some of the construction costs for a $\frac{1}{2}$ acre park.

Special Assessment Tax

A tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ mil is levied on all properties in the district. The tax is based on the total assessed value of the land and improvements. The special assessment tax provides the Downtown Development Authority with approximately 50% of its annual operating budget. Other funds are obtained from foundations, contributions from individuals, and contributions from corporations.

Future Plans

The Downtown Development Authority hopes to raise additional funds for downtown improvements through tax increment financing of future construction projects. Legislation passed in 1978 authorized the use of tax increment financing in the State of Florida.

Affiliates

The Downtown Development Authority works closely with the Department of City Planning and the Department of Public Works.

Staff

Administrative positions in the organization include the Executive Director, Director of Management and Budget, Director of Urban Design, and Director of Marketing.

Tallahassee, Florida

Downtown Improvement Association

Background

A group of 22 businesspeople recognized the need for an organization which would develop a work program for capital improvements and promotional activities. The merchants, members of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, understood the advantages of creating a downtown improvement district.

Scope of Services

The Downtown Improvement Association has designed advertising campaigns, completed a feasibility study for a parking garage, and constructed a walkway to a major bank.

Special Assessment Tax

A tax of one mil is levied on all properties in the district except those which are tax-exempt institutions. The tax is based on the total assessed value of the land and improvements. The tax levy was suggested by a group of businesspeople within the district. The Downtown Improvement Association obtains additional funding from foundation grants. The boundaries of the district were adopted by a vote of property owners in the district. A zone of benefits formula for calculating the tax levy was discussed, but the response was unfavorable.

Future Plans

If the Tallahassee City Commission names the Downtown Improvement Association as an authorized agency, the Association may work toward tax increment financing of new construction in the district.

Affiliates

The Downtown Improvement Association maintains a close working relationship with the Department of City Planning, the State Planning and Zoning Board, and the Historic Preservation Board.

Staff

The Downtown Improvement Association has a staff of two, including the Executive Director and an aide.

Orlando, Florida

Downtown Development Board

Background

The City of Orlando created a downtown development district in order to reverse a trend of declining retail activity. With one exception, the major department stores had moved to regional shopping centers by 1969, the year the district was approved. The number of vacancies has declined dramatically since that time as a result of activity in the private sector.

Scope of Services

The Development Board conducts planning and feasibility studies, develops promotional strategies, and coordinates the activities of the Sanitation, Parks and Streets Departments within the district.

Special Assessment Tax

A tax of one mil is levied on properties within the district. The tax is based on the total assessed value of the land and improvements. The district's boundaries were revised many times during the planning process. A large area south of the district which includes many medical office buildings and a hospital was excluded because of opposition to the special assessment.

Future Plans

The Development Board would like to become directly involved in redevelopment in the future.

Affiliates

The organization maintains a working relationship with the Department of Sanitation, Department of Parks, and the Department of Streets.

Staff

The staff includes an Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant.

Whittier, California

Whittier California Uptown Association

Background

The Whittier City Council created a downtown improvement district in 1969 to foster cooperation between merchants. A small group of businesses had taken responsibility for downtown promotional activities before the founding of the improvement district. These business people and members of city government hoped the improvement district, including a special tax assessment, would distribute the responsibility of promoting the downtown equitably. An active merchant organization was also needed to address the physical deterioration of some downtown areas and vacancies in the downtown.

Scope of Services

Monies collected through a special tax assessment are used for the design and distribution of promotional materials. These materials include newsletters to stimulate interest in the Association's activities among merchants, press releases and brochures to advertise the desirability of building and/or relocating to Whittier, and special events to attract people to the downtown.

The Uptown Association is also assembling a demographic profile of Whittier in order to determine an appropriate retail mix for the downtown. The Uptown Association has conducted seminars to assist merchants in developing more effective marketing techniques.

Special Assessment Tax

Special Assessment taxes are calculated on the basis of the location and type of business. The tax is levied on tenants, though some tenants are also property owners, by using the cost of a business license as the base figure. Businesses located on either of the two major commercial streets pay a tax which is twice the cost of their business license. Retail businesses located elsewhere pay a special assessment which is $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the cost of their business license. Professional offices and service oriented businesses pay a special assessment of $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost of their business license or \$10, whichever amount is higher.

Issues of Concern

As downtown Whittier has become more attractive as a location, rents have begun to increase. Rent increases have forced a number of marginal businesses to close.

Future Plans

The Uptown Association would like to include a new downtown development project being completed by a private developer in the downtown improvement district.

Whittier, California

Affiliates

The Whittier City Council has worked toward the goal of downtown improvement by completing \$1,000,000 in sidewalk and street improvements and by establishing design guidelines for facades and signage in the improvement district.

Staff

The Uptown Association has a staff of two, including the Executive Director and a part-time secretary.

Redlands. California

Downtown Redlands Improvement District

Background

The merchants of downtown Redlands wanted to encourage shoppers to park downtown by removing parking meters and providing validation parking programs. Their goals were implemented through the creation of a downtown development district whose structure is legislated by California law AB 103.

Scope of Services

In addition to its parking program, the Improvement District stages public events, promotes special events, and provides funds to maintain street furniture within the district.

Special Assessment Tax

Special assessment taxes are calculated according to the type of business at each location. A retail business pays a special assessment which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the cost of its business license. A professional office pays a special assessment which is 25% of the cost of its business license. Residential tenants are exempt from the tax according to the terms of state law AB 103. Financial institutions are exempt from the tax because they are licensed by federal rather than state regulatory agencies. However, two of the four downtown banks made voluntary contributions to the improvement district.

Staff

The staff includes the Executive Director.

San Diego, California

Central City Association

Scope of Services

The Central City Association manages sidewalk maintenance, stages special events, and serves as an advocate for the merchants located in a parking and business improvement district created under California law AB 103.

Special Assessment Tax

Special assessment taxes in the parking and business improvement district are based on the cost of local business licenses.

A smaller special assessment district was created to finance capital improvements along an 8 block mall. Special assessment taxes are based on the square footage of commercial space in each property fronting the mall. The assessment is adjusted yearly to reflect changes in cost of the maintenance contract.

Future Projects

The organization is becoming directly involved in promoting new construction projects and assisting developers to locate tenants.

Affiliates

The Central City Association maintains close contact with the Parks and Recreation Department since this department maintains the landscaping on the mall.

Staff

The staff includes the Executive Director, a Public Relations/Membership Assistant, and a Secretary.

Flint, Michigan

Downtown Development Authority

Background

Downtown Flint was a healthy and frequently used area when the development district was formed. However, there was general agreement among property owners about the need to plan for and to encourage new development.

Scope of Services

The major focus of the Development Authority is to encourage new construction projects in the downtown. The Authority has financed the construction of a parking facility through a tax increment financing program.

The organization is planning a mixed use development which will include a hotel, convention center, and office space. Foundation grants and funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation provided the seed money for this project. Once completed, this development will contribute monies to the Development Authority through a tax increment financing program.

Special Tax Assessment

A tax of two mills is levied on properties within the development district. All residential properties within the district are excluded from the tax. The monies raised through the special assessment pay the operating expenses of the Development Authority.

Recently, an extension of the development district was proposed because additional property owners would now like to be included in the district. Eventually the Development Authority plans to remove the special assessment levy and fund its operating expenses with monies collected from tax increment financing projects.

Staff

The staff includes the Executive Director and a Secretary/Bookkeeper.

Bay City, Michigan

Downtown Development Authority

Background

The Downtown Development Authority was created by the city government to encourage new construction in the district. Vacancy rates began to rise because regional shopping malls attracted former downtown tenants.

Scope of Services

The Development Authority serves as the intermediary between developers, city government, and the business community when new construction projects are proposed.

The organization works with Downtown Bay City, a merchants association, in solving vacancy problems and promoting the downtown.

Although not directly involved in maintenance procedures, the organization functions as the merchants' advocate regarding the improvement of city services such as trash collection and parking availability.

The Board of Directors of the Development Authority was influential in supporting the reconstruction of a downtown park though the funds to reconstruct the park came from the Sewer Authority. Concerts in the park have helped keep the downtown active after working hours. The park has improved the overall image of downtown.

Special Assessment Tax

A tax of two mills is levied on all properties in the development district. The tax is based on the total assessed value of the land and improvements. The special assessment tax raises approximately \$30,000 per year. The balance of the Development Authority's operating budget has come from Community Development Block Grants in the past and will come from the city's general fund in the future. The few residential property owners on the edges of the district agreed to pay the special assessment because they are planning to sell or redevelop their properties for commercial use. A commercial property on the edge of the district was excluded because it served a neighborhood rather than a regional market.

Issues of Concern

Trash collection scheduling has been a periodic problem in the development district. Early morning collections were tried, but merchants had to leave their trash on the street all night. Trash was often scattered by the wind.

In addition some merchants generate high volumes of trash but do not wish to supplement city collection services with a private collection service because of its cost.

Future Plans

A mixed use development including a hotel, office space, retail space, and a skyway connecting this building with a convention center is currently planned. The city acquired several properties and has assembled a site large enough for the project.

The city is also involved in a joint venture to construct a downtown parking garage. The project will be financed by Urban Development Action Grant monies and funds obtained from tax increment financing of the project.

Staff

The staff includes an Executive Director and a Secretary.

Port Huron, Michigan

Downtown Development Authority

Background

Port Huron competed successfully with Detroit markets before the development district was created. Though the downtown was completely occupied, merchants were concerned about the possibility of having to compete with a number of proposed regional shopping centers.

Scope of Services

The Downtown Development Authority was founded to promote new construction projects in the downtown. It has formulated a Tax Increment Financing Plan in conjunction with construction of a riverfront park and construction on vacant land within the district.

Special Assessment Tax

A tax of two mills is levied on all properties in the development district. The tax is based on the total assessed value of the land and improvements. The funds are used to cover the operating costs of the organization.

Future Plans

The Development Authority is in the process of creating a parking assessment district in order to cover losses sustained by the City of Port Huron in operating downtown parking facilities.

Affiliates

The Development Authority's work program is carried out by members of the Department of City Planning.

Fargo Parking Authority

Fargo, North Dakota

Background

A parking district was created by the Municipal Parking Authority in 1966 to finance new parking facilities. The Authority is a city agency which is funded by parking revenues and special assessment taxes.

Scope of Services

The organization is responsible for managing three assessment districts whose boundaries sometimes overlap. They include a parking district which contains four municipal parking lots, a mall improvement district, and a Christmas decoration assessment district. The parking district generates most of the revenue of the Parking Authority.

Special Assessment Taxes

A bond was sold to provide the Parking Authority with the funds needed to construct a parking garage. Revenues generated by the garage are used to make interest payments on the bond and to cover the operating expenses of the Parking Authority. If these revenues are unable to cover the cost of the interest payments and/or the operating expenses of the Authority, a special assessment tax is levied to raise whatever funds are needed. The special assessment tax is determined by the distance from each property to the parking garage. Properties closest to the parking garage pay the highest taxes.

A group of merchants formed an assessment district in order to finance the cost of capital improvements and maintenance services needed for a mall which were not absorbed by the city. The properties are taxed on the amount of commercial space in each property. Maintenance costs are shared equally by the assessment district and the city government. The district proposes a yearly maintenance budget which is then sent to the Board of the Municipal Parking Authority for approval. Maintenance activities include trash collection, street cleaning, and repair of street furniture and amenities.

A third assessment district was established to pay for the purchase, storage, repair, and electricity needed for Christmas decoration. The assessment is based on the number of decorations placed on each property. Costs are projected for a five year period.

Issues of Concern

Fargo currently has two major storefront vacancies. Some merchants have cited the high cost of special assessments as one factor in their decision to move out of the downtown. However, most merchants in Fargo are also property owners and do not object to the special assessments.

Future Plans

The Municipal Parking Authority would like to construct an additional parking garage.

Staff

The staff includes an Executive Director and a Secretary.

Little Rock, Arkansas

Metrocentre Improvement District No. 1

Background

The downtown development district was created to construct a pedestrian mall in response to physical deterioration and a decline in downtown retail activity.

Scope of Services

The organization monitored the construction of the mall which included new sidewalks and streets, planters, benches and a fountain. A maintenance crew is responsible for the upkeep of the mall.

Special Assessment Tax

A special assessment tax is levied on all property owners within the improvement district in order to make payments on a loan obtained for capital improvements. An annual assessment of not more than 0.5% of the assessed value of the improvements is levied in order to operate, maintain, and repair capital improvements.

Staff

The staff includes an Executive Director, Marketing Director, Executive Secretary, Receptionist, a year-round maintenance crew of five, and a summer maintenance crew of eight.

New Orleans, Louisiana

Downtown Development District

Background

In 1975 the Downtown Development District was created by state legislation and approved in a city-wide voter's referendum. Its purpose is to strengthen the central business district by planning and implementing improvements and services. The district includes a 100 square block area.

The district was developed from a growth management program that was established by the city and the Central Area Council in 1973. In order to insure a funding source a special tax assessment was established. The special tax funds are used for services and improvements over and above those normally provided by the City.

Scope of Services

The Downtown Development District is involved in security, maintenance, promotions, economic development, and monitoring street activities. In 1980, approximately two-thirds of the district funds were used for services and one-third for capital improvements.

A district police contingent consisting of 10 foot patrolmen and 1 supervising sergeant are assigned to maximize visibility and reduce crime.

The district hires a full-time maintenance officer who has the authority to fine merchants who do not cooperate with the City's health and sidewalk sanitation codes. In one year, the maintenance officer took 25 merchants to court for various violations. Funds also provide for extra sanitation services such as six-day garbage collection, street cleaning and washing, and emptying of litter receptacles.

A shuttle bus provides a transit route through the retail and office core. The Downtown Development District subsidizes the operating expenses of the bus route to keep fares low.

The district conducts numerous promotional activities including publication of a newsletter, retail sales promotion, and cultural activities promotion.

The district sponsors a number of cultural events during the year including six weeks of noon-time "Brown Bag" concerts, an annual Arts Festival, theatre, concerts and art exhibits.

The district is embarking on four major capital projects for 1981. In order to accomplish this program, the district is establishing a reserve fund for the debt service on the proposed issuance of approximately \$6.5 million in limited obligation bonds.

Issues of Concern

The primary problems result from expectations of the property owners. Every year there are renewed demands for more police and sanitation services although the original function of the district was the promotion of capital improvement projects.

The district also has difficulty defining the extent of its services because its objective has been to provide only services which are over and above those normally provided by the city. Tax district funds are not meant to be a substitute for city funds, but as an addition to regular city expenditures and investments in the central business district. It has been very difficult to determine what level of services should normally be provided by the city.

Issues of Concern

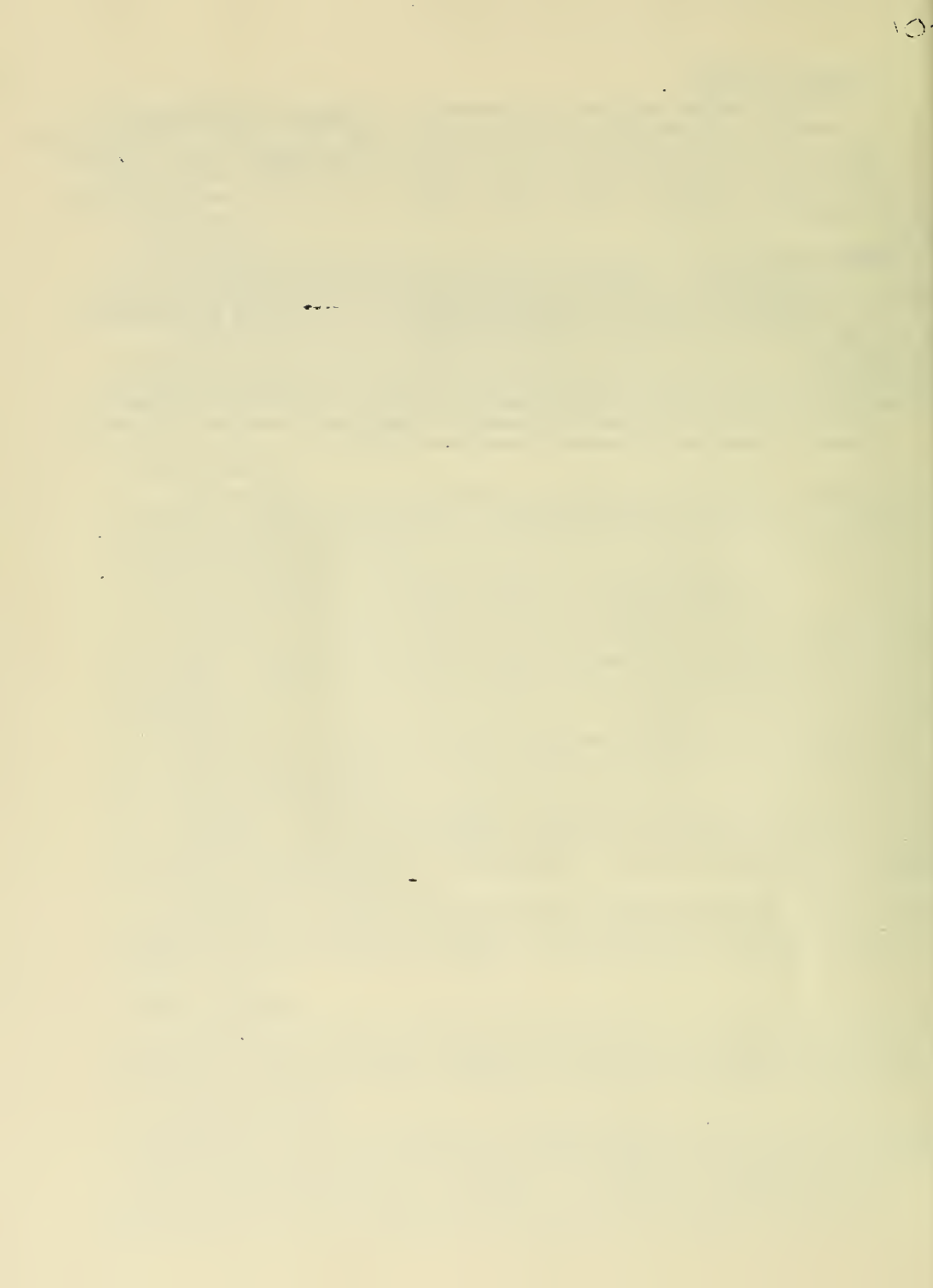
The Committee feels that the perception of security in the Downtown is a problem. Legal limitations on police restrict their ability to deal with alcoholics, emotionally disturbed people and panhandlers. These people, it is felt, contribute to a poor image of downtown though they do not commit serious crimes. The security program increases police visibility, but is not a real deterrent to undesirable activities.

Future Plans

The Committee would like to expand in the area of economic development by establishing a local development corporation. It also would like to manage the Farmers Market as a year-round activity.

Staff

Executive Director, Deputy Director, Director and Assistant Director of Public Information, Director and Assistant Director of Operations, Director of Economic Development, Economic Development planners.





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